













Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation









**Publications**  
of the  
**Westchester County**  
**Historical Society**



**Volume V**



Officers of the  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
(Founded 1874)

1926-1927

---

CHARLES J. DUNLAP . . . . .	President
New Rochelle	
DIXON RYAN FOX . . . . .	First Vice-President
Hartsdale	
J. MAYHEW WAINWRIGHT . . . . .	Second Vice-President
Rye	
ARTHUR ISELIN . . . . .	Third Vice-President
Katonah	
REGINALD P. RAY . . . . .	Treasurer
White Plains	
CHARLES EVERETT MOORE . . . . .	Recording Secretary
White Plains	
RICHARD WEBBER . . . . .	Corresponding Secretary
New Rochelle	
STEPHEN HOLDEN . . . . .	Librarian
White Plains	
ALVAH P. FRENCH . . . . .	Curator
Port Chester	

---

TRUSTEES, REPRESENTING CITIES AND TOWNS:

CORNELIUS R. AGNEW . . . . .	North Castle
EDGAR MAYHEW BACON . . . . .	Greenburgh
FRANKLIN COUCH . . . . .	Cortlandt
BERTRAM H. FANCHER . . . . .	Poundridge
WILLIAM S. HADAWAY . . . . .	New Rochelle
THOMAS J. HARRIS . . . . .	Scarsdale
ARTHUR W. LAWRENCE . . . . .	Eastchester
RICHARD H. LAWRENCE . . . . .	Lewisboro
THATCHER T. P. LUQUER . . . . .	Bedford
SEABURY C. MASTICK . . . . .	Mt. Pleasant
BURTON C. MEIGHAN . . . . .	Mamaroneck
ISAAC N. MILLS . . . . .	Mount Vernon
WILLIAM R. MONTGOMERY . . . . .	Pelham
WILLIAM MULDOON . . . . .	Purchase
FLOYD O. REED . . . . .	Yonkers
A. OUTRAM SHERMAN . . . . .	Rye
FELIX M. WARBURG . . . . .	White Plains
L. HOLLINGSWORTH WOOD . . . . .	New Castle

## COMMITTEES

---

### Publication

PROF. DIXON R. FOX  
Columbia University, New York City  
EDWARD C. BAILLY A. OUTRAM SHERMAN

### Sites and Markers

COL. THATCHER T. P. LUQUER, Bedford Hills  
WILLIAM X. WEED DR. THOMAS J. HARRIS  
HERBERT B. NICHOLS

### Westchester County Bibliography

WILLIAM S. HADAWAY, New Rochelle  
OTTO HUFELAND H. M. LYDENBERG

### Indian Remains in Westchester County

WILLIAM A. MOORE, New Rochelle

### Westchester County Genealogy

CLARENCE E. LEONARD, Yonkers

### Membership

RICHARD WEBBER, New Rochelle

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY

1927

(Under whose patronage this volume is published)

EDWARD P. BARRETT, Bedford	HERBERT C. GERLACH, Ossining
HERBERT D. TOMPKINS, Cortlandt	DAVID LYON, Pelham
FREDERICK P. CLOSE, Eastchester	GEORGE I. RUSCOE, Poundridge
CHARLES D. MILLARD, Greenburgh	W. DEFORREST SHERWOOD, Rye
BENJAMIN I. TAYLOR, Harrison	GEORGE W. FIELD, Scarsdale
EDWARD H. SMITH, Lewisboro	GEORGE TURNER, Somers
GEORGE W. BURTON, Mamaroneck	THEODORE C. RANSCHT, White Plains
CHARLES J. MARASCO, Mount Pleasant	JAMES H. MORAN, White Plains
GEORGE S. HAIGHT, Mount Vernon	JOSEPH B. MCCARTHY, White Plains
JOHN DONALDSON, Mount Vernon	WILLIAM J. WINN, Yonkers
THOS. H. HODGE, Mount Vernon	JOHN F. RYAN, Yonkers
JAMES BERG, Mount Vernon	CHARLES H. TOWNER, Yonkers
JOHN G. ARCHER, Mount Vernon	FRANK MADDEN, Yonkers
HOWARD R. WASHBURN, New Castle	JAMES A. SULLIVAN, Yonkers
LEONARD H. GOLDSMITH, New Rochelle	THOS. J. WALSH, Yonkers
PAUL M. CRANDELL, New Rochelle	EDMUND SICKLEY, Yonkers
GEORGE T. BACON, New Rochelle	WILLIAM H. LESLIE, Yonkers
JOSEPH J. MANCUSI, New Rochelle	FRANK S. MCCOLLUM, Yonkers
J. HOBART COX, North Castle	LOUIS MILLIOT, Yonkers
ALBERT J. LOBDELL, North Salem	GEORGE W. SMYTH, Yonkers

JAMES N. STRANG, Yorktown





147 / 1-2  
1912

Publications of the Westchester County Historical Society  
Volume V

---

# The McDonald Papers

Including  
Biographical Notes of the Author

PART II

Edited by  
William S. Hadaway

Published for Westchester County by the  
Westchester County Historical Society  
White Plains, N. Y.  
1927

CONCORDIA COLLEGE LIBRARY  
BRONXVILLE, N. Y. 10708

7503

Copyright, 1927  
by  
Westchester County Historical Society



Made in the United States of America

## INTRODUCTION

The publication of *The McDonald Papers* by the Westchester County Historical Society has been made possible by the aid, consent and coöperation of the New York Historical Society, in whose archives the manuscripts are deposited. To that Society, and to its Librarian, Alexander J. Wall, who has given every possible assistance, acknowledgments are hereby rendered for these courtesies.

The data in the biography of John M. Macdonald have been largely secured from James A. Macdonald of Flushing, L. I., a worthy representative of a distinguished family. He remembers his uncle very clearly and his memory is fortified by family records and diaries.

Into the thread of the story as related by him has been woven a mass of detail secured from other sources and he is in no wise responsible for the form in which the biography is presented.

The paragraph that expressed appreciation of Mr. Macdonald's aid has been deleted in accordance with his request. It is the simple truth, however, to record that without his coöperation the biography of his uncle would have been less complete. His knowledge of the facts served a similar purpose to the mortar that binds dissimilar materials together in a building.

The Resolutions spread upon the Minutes of the New York Historical Society by George H. Moore, LL.D. were discovered after Chapter IX was written. Moore's information undoubtedly came from John M. Macdonald himself, during a long period of association. It will be noted that there is substantial agreement as to material information in each instance.

The pamphlets describing the careers of Dr. Archibald

Macdonald and his son Dr. James Macdonald are included in the Hufeland Westchesteriana. Many other references were either found or checked there and I here record my deepest gratitude to Otto Hufeland of Mount Vernon, N. Y. During an affliction that interrupted my work for a period of several months he continued the investigations, read proof and gave every possible assistance.

The Supervisors of Westchester County made the publication of these "Papers" possible by an appropriation for historical education. To them the Westchester County Historical Society extends the heartiest thanks for contributing to the support of its publications.

To all others who have helped in any way in securing data, in examining records or by suggestions grateful appreciation is here recorded.

WILLIAM S. HADAWAY,  
*Editor.*

New Rochelle, N. Y.

Dec. 24th, 1927



## CONTENTS OF PART II

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	ix
<i>CHAPTER</i>	
I.—THE NEUTRAL GROUND OF WESTCHESTER, CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE SURPRISE AND CAPTURE ON THE 29TH OF APRIL, 1780, OF COL. DELANCEY'S POST AT ARCHER'S HOUSE IN FORDHAM . . . . .	1
II.—THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE MARQUIS DE LA ROUËRIE (COL. ARMAND), INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS SERVICES DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR . . . .	15
III.—THE SURPRISE AND CAPTURE OF POUNDRIIDGE ON THE 2ND OF JULY, 1779, BY LIEUT. COL. TARLETON, WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THAT OFFICER . . . . .	36
IV.—COL. DELANCEY'S FINAL DEPARTURE FROM WESTCHESTER . . . . .	50
V.—RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION—FOUND AMONG THE McDONALD MANUSCRIPTS AND PROBABLY WRITTEN FOR HIS USE BY JUDGE CALEB TOMPKINS . . . . .	53
VI.—MOSIER'S FIGHT WITH THE REFUGEES ON DECEMBER 2ND, 1781—AN AMPLIFIED ACCOUNT BASED ON THE McDONALD "INTERVIEWS." BY OTTO HUFELAND . . . . .	65

CHAPTER	PAGE
VII.—ANDREW CORSA—OBITUARY—THE LAST OF THE WESTCHESTER GUIDES. BY JOHN M. MAC- DONALD . . . . .	73
VIII.—RESOLUTIONS SPREAD UPON THE MINUTES OF THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN M. MACDONALD AT A MEETING HELD DECEMBER 1, 1863. BY GEORGE H. MOORE, LL.D. . . . .	78
IX.—JOHN MACLEAN MACDONALD—A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND AN ACCOUNT OF HIS "INTER- VIEWS" AND "PAPERS." BY WILLIAM S. HADAWAY . . . . .	84
INDEX . . . . .	99

## CHAPTER I

### THE NEUTRAL GROUND

I propose, upon the present occasion, to place before this society, the particulars of a bold and successful partisan exploit belonging to the American revolutionary contest, and accomplished in the spring of 1780, upon the borders of New York county.

In order that my narrative may be the more readily comprehended, a few preliminary remarks seem requisite, in relation to the origin and action of that desultory drama, of which the country between Harlem river and Peekskill was for seven years, the theatre.

From the month of November in the year 1776 until 1783, the lines of the American army which looked southerly toward New York City, were formed north of Croton river, and extended from the Hudson, across the upper part of Westchester County, and through a small portion of Connecticut, to the Sound: while the light troops occupied a chain of movable posts, several miles in front of this stationary force. Twice, it is true, the main body of the Continental forces advanced to Kingsbridge and lay, for about two months, at Whiteplains or in its immediate vicinity; menacing, each time, the great citadel of the royal operations. So too, at various other times, strong detachments from the main army suddenly marched as low down as Morrisania or Kingsbridge, and having beaten up the enemy's quarters, soon after withdrew; while upon different occasions, the advanced guards of the upper party established for short periods, a chain of pickets, from the high grounds above Tarrytown, through Whiteplains and the Purchase, to Connecticut. But the permanent lines of the American army of observation in Westchester County, were, *almost always*, drawn a short distance

above that stream, whose name now resounds throughout every household of our city, and must forever be entitled to a just renown. In the infancy of our country, the Croton served as a barrier against hostile progress, while at the present moment, it furnishes a necessary element, in its purest form, to the metropolis of the Western hemisphere.

With respect to the Royalists, their ordinary alignment, during the season commonly devoted to military operations, extended from the Hudson, two or three miles above Kingsbridge, across the lower parts of Yonkers and Eastchester, to the Sound; protected on either flank by vessels of war, and out-guarded by a regular succession of pickets. From the middle of May until the approach of cold weather, these lines of occupation were composed chiefly of regular troops, both horse and foot, of whom one or two Hessian regiments, of yagers always formed a part. Twice, in 1777 and 1779 when the river fortresses were reduced, the British standard was displayed as far north as the Highland mountains above Peekskill, and for a short time, nearly the whole county of Westchester was held in subjection by the enemy. At several other times moreover, the main body of the king's forces crossed the Spyt den duivel Creek, and encamped on the high grounds that extend north of the villages of Yonkers and Eastchester, until the approach of winter, when the regular forces invariably withdrew, and took up their quarters, either upon Long Island, or within New York county, near Kingsbridge. During this last season, the defense of the British outposts was intrusted, almost entirely, to one or two corps in the king's service, which were composed of native Americans. While winter continued, the royal commanders, for greater security, sometimes drew in their pickets a little nearer to New York Island, and they then ran southeasterly from Tippet's hill, across Westchester village, to the East river; but during the remainder of the year, their advanced guards were usually stationed as I have mentioned above.

The country between these hostile lines comprised the region, which from that time to the present, has been called the "*Neutral Ground.*" The inhabitants of this territory,

*then* consisted, for the most part, of husbandmen who were either old or of middle age, and of women and children. From the beginning of the war, almost all the young men had been out in arms, either for the King or the Commonwealth. Whole sets of brothers, some of them yet in boyhood, had abandoned the paternal household and gone off to enrol themselves among soldiers, either above or below. They generally remained together, but sometimes disagreed in allegiance and joined hostile ranks; often, never more to behold each other, and not unfrequently to meet again, face to face, in mortal controversy.

The unhappy conditions of the peaceful, and, for the most part, aged proprietors, who clung to their homes and strove to extract a miserable subsistence from their native soil, could not fail to excite general sympathy; and the public authorities, both Republican and Royal, in consideration of their neutrality, not only allowed them to remain, but extended to them such protection as was practicable. But, although in general unmolested by the military, or by men in office, they were fair game for the lawless followers who hung loosely upon the skirts of either party; being sometimes tortured to the verge of death for a confession of the places where their valuables were concealed, frequently robbed of their clothing and cattle, and often compelled, for months together, to seek safety during night, by sleeping in barns, under haystacks, or amidst the deepest recesses of the woods. So unmerciful and continued were these persecutions, that, as men of the firmest mould afterward related of themselves, they started with alarm on hearing the baying of a watch-dog, and suffered nervous disturbance even from a simple knocking at the door. Such were the circumstances under which the farmers of the "*Neutral Ground*" contrived to prolong a precarious existence throughout a civil war of seven years' duration; tormented in the morning by marauders who shouted "*God and the King*," and at night by plunderers, who huzzaed for "*God and Congress*."

From an early period of the war, the advanced posts of the British lines in Westchester had been held, mainly, by two



bodies of American-born chasseurs, consisting, for the most part, of young men, natives of the lower towns, of refugees from the upper and middle portions of the county, and of loyalists, who had fled or been driven from Dutchess and Connecticut. The first raised of these corps consisted of two infantry companies, one of musketeers and the other of riflemen; together with a troop of light dragoons, and was under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Andreas Emmerich. This officer was by birth a Hanoverian, educated to arms from early life, who in his youth had served in Germany during the celebrated "Seven years' war," at the head of a small body of rangers, and was sent out to the assistance of royalty in this country with a reputation, which he is said to have justly deserved, of possessing extraordinary abilities as a partisan. During the first years of the war, his chasseurs became very celebrated, and did the crown good service; but afterward, partly from the severity of his discipline, and partly from his foreign birth and manners, his men became dissatisfied and deserted, and most of his officers sought service under other commanders. The other corps was much more numerous; consisting of four or five troops of light dragoons and seven or eight companies of foot, and during the latter part of the war, these were the light troops upon whose exertions the crown chiefly relied, in the county of Westchester. They were first commanded by Major Bearmore, and subsequently by the redoubtable Colonel James Delancey of Westfarms. Proper military instruction had been extended to them, and, to combine example with command, a battalion of regulars and a squadron of the Sixteenth or Seventeenth light dragoons had been ordered to encamp in their vicinity, and unite in their exercises. When not on duty, they occupied the woods and fields of Morrisania, whose proprietors were republicans, and for the most part, in the service of the United States. *There*, where populous villages now gladden the eye, the British refugees lived in log-huts, upon lands assigned them by the royal authorities, making free use of the soil, and committing waste at discretion, upon what they termed the property of rebels. Bands of this daring and restless

legionary corps, particularly of the dragoons, continually ranged across the "*Neutral Ground*," and, under leaders desirous of distinction, attacked the patrols and out-posts of their opponents, and sometimes captured and bore away supplies intended for the continental army. *This* was legitimate warfare, but from this they would often degenerate. They did not always respect the lives or property of those who inhabited the neutral domain, and beyond that protected district, they levied contributions upon every whig obnoxious for his activity; they not unfrequently sought their former homes in search of vengeance for private griefs, and rarely failed to discover and take off a fine horse, without regard to the politics of the owner.

To countercheck the operations of this formidable corps of light troops, volunteer associations were formed among the young whigs, composed for the most part of American refugees, a few of whom had fled from New York and Long Island, but who were principally from the middle and lower parts of Westchester county. These bands, like those of their adversaries, consisted of both horse and foot, and held themselves ready at all times, for a march against their royal antagonists. In large operations, they never failed to accompany the regular troops and New York levies, acting upon such occasions under the command of the continental and state officers, while they always planned and conducted their own excursions. Each troop or company, generally either nominated or selected its own officers, some of whom gained a great local celebrity for enterprise and courage. Among these, were the captains Delavan, Honeywell, Williams, Stevenson, Sackett, Dean, and Lieutenant Mosier. Great pains had been taken in teaching them the military duties required of horsemen, by several officers who had belonged to the hussars or light dragoons of France or Germany. In a short time the mounted American refugees became expert cavaliers, excelled in the sabre exercise on horseback; and finding fire-arms almost useless when in the saddle, soon learned to place their entire reliance upon a powerful steed and a good broad-sword.

Much more usually than their opponents, the *American* refugees sought for honorable distinction in their desultory contests; but it would be a strange anomaly in civil war, if the volunteer soldier never prosecuted retaliation for private wrong and did not sometimes condescend to sweep away from the hostile marches, whatever was valuable. The *British* refugees were the more numerous, and their excursions the more frequent and successful, during the first years of the war; but before its close the tide had turned in favor of their antagonists, whose services had made them popular, and whose ranks were filled with the patriotic and the enterprising.

As soon as the British and the American refugees had been arrayed against each other, hostile parties were constantly hovering about the alternate borders. Encounters, both accidental and premeditated, grew out of these continued movements. The combatants most usually were horsemen and notwithstanding the moral degeneracy caused by civil war, not unfrequently exhibited a deportment, such as ancient stories assign to chivalry. Ordinarily they piqued themselves upon the point of honor and were generous to captives. Every steed, it is true, that was fit for a troopers mounting, was considered a lawful prize; but in extenuation they contended, that the urgent wants of the King or the necessities of the States, gave a sanction to such captures. With this exception, the hands of many, perhaps most of them, were unstained by plunder. Great rivalry sprang up between the champions of the opposite parties, who were sometimes kinsmen, and often, either as friends or as foes, well known to each other. Under these circumstances challenges were sometimes given and accepted, and combats, both single and between adversaries of equal numbers, were fought: not unlike those that romance loves to dwell upon when she speaks of Roland or Almanzar, and recounts passages at arms which took place along the slopes of Roncesvalles, or encounters that happened on the plains of Alarcos.

At the beginning of the year 1780, the out-posts of the American army of observation in Westchester county, had, for some time, been north of the Croton. This was the mem-

orable "*cold winter*" of the revolution. The rivers and creeks about New York City, and even the harbor itself, were covered with ice of unprecedented thickness, water communications were suspended, and the British forces lost the security of their insular positions. It was well known that the enemy's troops, in common with the citizens, were suffering from a scarcity of provisions. The extravagant prices which the necessities of life commanded in the British markets, furnished irresistible temptation to the farmers living in the eastern parts of Westchester, Dutchess, and Albany counties, where a very considerable part of the population was not well disposed toward American independence and not only loyalists but lukewarm whigs, availed themselves of every opportunity of sending cattle and provisions below. The owners or conductors of these supplies were generally accompanied by a band of well armed men, who protected the droves and guarded the sleighs filled with grain and flour. They passed along by-roads where they seldom met any but friends, through neighborhoods disaffected to the republican cause, moving for the most part rapidly and by night, halting in the obscurity of the thickest woods; and avoiding *large* and ready to fight with *small* parties of the American militia, they generally proceeded in safety to their journey's end.

Toward the conclusion of January, this intercourse was for a short time, put an end to, by Colonel Thompson, who at the head of three hundred men, crossed the Croton and possessed himself of the roads and passes usually traversed by those who traded below. The inhabitants of New York City soon felt the consequences of this movement. Tryon, who was still the Royal governor, and Lieutenant-general Knyphausen, who commanded in the absence of Sir Henry Clinton, immediately determined upon an enterprise, which had for its object, the destruction of Thompson's corps, and the re-opening of communications with the interior. For these purposes, Lieutenant-colonel Norton of the guards, on the evening of the 2d of February, with a strong detachment of troops in sleighs, was sent against the American colonel at that time posted at Youngs' House on the high grounds be-



tween Tarrytown and Whiteplains. The result of this excursion was, that early on the ensuing morning, Colonel Thompson was surprised, his post taken by a superior force, and his followers killed, captured or dispersed.

After this disaster, the advanced posts of the American lines were again drawn back and formed above the right bank of the Croton, under the command of Colonel Millen, and as the spring opened, the British refugees in large numbers, frequently approached and even attacked, the pickets of the upper party. Preparations had for some time been making to retaliate these insults by striking a heavy blow at Colonel Delancey, who was stationed on Fordham Manor in the immediate vicinity of Spyt den duivel Creek, and whose head-quarters were *then* at Archer's House, a stone building which is yet standing, and situate adjacent to the high ground upon which the mansion of Louis Morris Esquire, has of late years been erected. This was considered a station of more than ordinary security, being as much as three miles within the enemy's out-posts, and distant only about three hundred yards from the British redoubt No. 8, containing a strong garrison. About one hundred and fifty men had been carefully selected for the contemplated service from the different Massachusetts regiments, to whom were added about thirty volunteers, and eight or ten guides then acting upon the lines. Among these last were the cousins Cornelius Oakley and James Oakley, the brothers Abraham and Michael Dyckman, John Odell and Samuel Youngs. Although overlooked by history, and almost unknown to a new generation, the memories of these men are cherished in their native county, where the first of each of the three groups above named, are still familiarly spoken of as "*The three great guides.*"

On one of the last days of April before preparations for the intended attack had been entirely completed, and in the absence of the two field-officers selected for the command, a strong party of Delancey's refugees came out to Singing, and then marched easterly to Chappaqua, for the purpose of covering the operations of some persons who were conducting a large drove of cattle from Dutchess county to the New



York market. When Colonel Millen heard of the enemy's approach, his drums beat to arms, and he ordered out the whole detachment intended for the movement against Delancey, with orders to pursue the refugees, and, if possible, to come up with and attack them. The command was given to Captain Cushing of the First Massachusetts battalion, he being the officer highest in command of all the selected corps then present. The volunteers, guides, and several of the officers were mounted, and the remainder on foot.

When Captain Cushing arrived at Chappaqua, he learnt that the enemy had retreated sometime previously. Hoping to overtake them by a rapid pursuit, he resumed his march until nightfall, when a heavy rain set in, and the commanding officer perceiving that his game had escaped, halted his followers near Milesquare, and announced his intention to return. This determination was opposed with much warmth by the guides, who urged that this was the moment to surprise the refugee-colonel in his quarters, while his men were reposing from the fatigues of their late excursion, and when, in consequence of the darkness of the night and the inclemency of the weather, they would probably be more off their guard than usual. Cushing answered, that it would be forestalling an attempt long since intended to be made by others who were his superiors in rank, that he had no authority to make the attack, and in case of failure, could not hope to escape censure; but before concluding, he confessed, that notwithstanding these objections, he was willing to strike at Delancey, if the guides, whose opinions were much relied upon at head-quarters, would *unanimously* advise him to pursue that course. The guides, after a short consultation, *all* gave their voices for proceeding with the enterprise.

The American commander then continued his march, cautiously traversing fields and woods, never approaching the picket-guards of the enemy, whose usual stations were well known to the guides, and avoiding carefully the British patrols. At length, when within a mile of the refugee head-quarters, he again halted to rest his men before the assault. An advanced party was placed in ambush behind a stone wall,

while a patrol of three men sent out of the British post was permitted to approach so near, that it was surrounded and taken, without creating any alarm. From the prisoners, Cushing learnt the number of men then at Delancey's quarters, and the situation of the house, together with the countersign for the night, and the important fact that in consequence of the darkness and storm, only a solitary sentinel was posted in advance of the building. He then called together in council, the chief guides and his first lieutenant Blake, and after a short deliberation, they formed a plan of attack, the chief feature of which was a determination to carry the post by an onset so sudden, that their opponents would not have time to stand to their arms. Having ascertained that the doors of Archer's House were each secured by three iron bars, while the windows were left unfurnished with any similar defense, Oakley of Whiteplains proposed to effect an entrance by bursting open the shutters and surprising the inmates in bed. This mode of attack was agreed to without hesitation, and the daring proposer, who was well acquainted with the situation of the building, was allowed the honor, which he earnestly solicited, of leading on the storming party. Cornelius Oakley, James Oakley and Abraham Dyckman then prepared to make the assault at the head of the guides; placing immediately before them one of the prisoners they had just taken, with assurances, that if he gave the right countersign when challenged, he should be well treated and set at liberty, otherwise he would be put to death upon the spot. The refugee at first refused to act the part assigned him, saying that if the lower party found it out, they would hang him, and rightfully; but the guides, after some persuasion, quieted both his honor and his fears by reminding him that he was acting under compulsion, and by the most solemn assurances that the fact should never be made known while the war lasted. The assailing party then moved forward in silence; Oakley of Whiteplains at the head of the guides, being a short distance in advance of the main body, while one half or more of the Continental detachment took post where they then were, in order to cover the retreat of their comrades.

As the guides approached Delancey's quarters, the soldier on guard hailed them, the true countersign was given by the captive royalist, and they continued moving forward, but while passing the sentinel, Abraham Dyckman rushed upon, disarmed and threw him to the ground, and at the same time prevented an alarm by holding his prisoner by the throat, and charging him at the peril of his life to keep quiet. Cushing then drew his party around the house in the utmost silence, while Cornelius Oakley, followed by the other guides and by Lieutenant Blake, advanced up to the building. The leader of the storming party then rolled a horse-block under one of the windows, and mounting it, placed his fingers between the shutters which he pried open in the upper part, so far as to ascertain that the soldiers of the post were all asleep except four, who were sitting around a table in the center of the room, engaged in playing cards. It was then arranged in a few whispered words, between the foremost assailants, that Cornelius Oakley, who wore a large and heavy horseman's cap, should force an entrance by jerking open the shutters and precipitating himself through the glass window. Before making the final attempt, he sought another view of the room, for the purpose of ascertaining the precise spot where the inmates had deposited their firearms. This time, however, when he pried open the shutters, which were old, they made a creaking sound, and Dyckman said, "*Take care, if you make so much noise you'll startle the refugees.*" "It's too late now," answered Oakley. "They are running for their arms.—Quick, follow me." Getting the fingers of both hands, fully between the shutters and pulling with his utmost force, he fortunately drew them open and instantly threw himself head foremost upon the glass window, carrying the lower sash in with him, and descending at full length upon the floor, followed by Dyckman and Blake, both of whom fell upon him. It was the effort of but a moment to extricate himself from the situation in which he lay, and to gain his feet, when he drew his sword and exclaimed to the astonished refugees: "Be still upon your lives. You are surrounded and can't escape. If one of you draws trigger, you shall all be put to

death." At this instant Dyckman with great presence of mind unbarred the door, whereupon Captain Cushing with guides, volunteers and Continental soldiers, to the number of thirty or more, entered the room and put an end to all opposition. One captain, two subalterns and seventeen non-commissioned officers and privates were captured, being the whole force at that time in the house. Colonel Delancey himself escaped upon this occasion, by accident. He had left his quarters toward night-fall to meet a flag of truce at Underhill's, near Williamsbridge, and was prevented from returning, by the rain. A British patrol that came in at this time, and some men taken at a neighboring house, swelled the number of prisoners to thirty-four. The American commander lost not a moment in securing his prisoners, and then fell back upon his covering-party, knowing full well that his only chance for safety lay in a rapid retreat, which was the more requisite, as some soldiers, quartered in the out-buildings, notwithstanding every precaution, had effected their escape.

Cushing had not joined his assailing force to that which he had left in ambush, before a firing of guns and rockets shewed that the British posts were alarmed, and he had scarcely entered the Sprain road, along which he retired, when he was overtaken by Major Huggefurd at the head of Delancey's cavalry. A skirmishing retreat was now kept up for more than six miles, the pursuing horse frequently attempting to charge; but the good dispositions made by the American commander, and the coolness and gallantry of the guides, officers and men, aided by a night of excessive darkness, rendered every adverse effort ineffectual. Toward day-break they approached the road leading from Whiteplains to Dobbs' Ferry. Here the British refugees got upon the left flank of the Americans, and compelled them to move by their right, across some open ground. Kipp, one of Delancey's captains, taking immediate advantage of this circumstance, led his troop to the charge; but a sharp fire from the rear of the Continental party, which killed or wounded several of the dragoons, here brought the pursuers to a stand, which was converted into a flight when the volunteers and guides urged



forward their jaded horses to a return charge. Cushing then continued his retreat unmolested through the fields north of the road, with the intention of gaining the highway which passes along the Saw-Mill river. His men finding themselves no longer pursued, began to congratulate one another, and to fancy their fatigues at an end and themselves in security. They were now passing a smooth and beautiful tract of land, consisting of large wheat-fields, called Acker's slope, that declined gently toward the west; when one of the captive officers addressed Michael Dyckman by whose side he was riding; "If our folks were here, this is the very spot where they would charge you." These words were scarcely uttered, when the blast of a trumpet was heard, which in the gray obscurity of early morning, and in the devious places they were traversing, seemed like the summons of the Archangel. In an instant, every foot became motionless and every eye was directed toward the rear, from which quarter the sound approached; when a party of horsemen came in sight close at hand, and commenced forming, apparently for a charge. It consisted, in fact, of the yager dragoons, from Kingsbridge, who had just come up, and joined themselves to Delancey's horsemen, apparently determined upon attacking their weary foes with numbers that seemed irresistible. Cushing's prisoners, who, tied together, had hitherto been marching quietly between the retreating platoons, now broke away from the ranks, exclaiming with loud shouts: "Our friends are coming, —Our friends are coming, we'll soon be clear." For a short time the soldiers were in dismay, and even some of the officers asked the guides in a whisper, whether it would not be better to disband and let every man shift for himself. The guides, with promptness, opposed a measure which the danger seemed to justify, but urged the commander to make instant preparations for resisting an attack. The Continental officers, assisted by Odell and the two Dyckmans, then went from rank to rank, encouraging the men, who speedily recovered from their panic, and were formed into a square, with the prisoners, who had been reclaimed with difficulty, secured in the centre. In this manner, they retired slowly across the open

grounds to the Saw-Mill-river-road, and during the same day, united themselves to Colonel Millen without further molestation. While they were forming for retreat, the yager cavalry, supported by the refugee troopers, seemed preparing for an onset, and their trumpets, without ceasing, continued sounding the charge; but for some reason or other, which the guides were always curious to find out, but could never ascertain, neither the Hessian horsemen nor their allies advanced within striking distance, although every circumstance appeared to favor an attack with the sabre.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LIFE, CHARACTER, &c.

#### OF THE

#### MARQUIS DE LA ROUËRIE (COL. ARMAND)

Of the many French adventurers who at an early period of the Revolutionary contest sought our shores, and whose subsequent services obtained for them an American reputation, La Fayette was probably the most useful, as he was certainly the most conspicuous. His merits were always recognized, and on the occasion of his final visit, a grateful welcome from youth and age, such as the world never saw before, hailed his advent. Next to him however in wealth and in that influence which is derived from high family connexions, and his equal in birth, generous devotion to the cause of freedom and services in the field, stood a young nobleman of about his own age, who generally passed in this country by the name of Monsieur Armand. From some cause or other the deserts of the latter have been much overlooked by biographers and historians, and little is generally known of him except that he raised a legion, at the head of which he served during the great contest. From a variety of sources, French and American, have been gathered the principal events of his life, a brief sketch of which I now put before the Society.

Armand Tuffin, Marquis de la Rouërie, was a gentleman of Brittany. He was born sometime in the year 1756, at the chateau de la Rouërie, on his patrimonial estate, between Saint Malo and Rennes. Of his early life little is known beyond the fact that the severity even of French education was insufficient to curb the ardent vivacity and headlong passions which it was his destiny to inherit. From infancy he had determined upon running the career of arms. While yet a



child he was created an officer in the French guards, and his feet were scarcely placed upon the stage of life, when he commenced a series of daring irregularities, lampooning and discharging jests at the most distinguished courtiers of Versailles, so that in early manhood he had attained preëminence over his compeers, as the greatest *frondeur* among the youth of France. Sometimes afterward he became captivated by the beauty and accomplishments of Mademoiselle de la Beaumesnil, a distinguished actress of the day, whom he proposed to marry. His friends were naturally shocked at the prospect of such a misalliance and hastened to interpose barriers, but their efforts proved unsuccessful, until the lady herself came to their aid and rejected his suit. Mortified at the discovery that he had made but a feeble impression upon her heart, he summoned to the field, fought with and wounded his rival, the count of Bourbon-Busset. These repeated acts of insubordination and license at length drew upon him the serious displeasure of the king, and he was dismissed from the service. Sinking under the burden of his calamities, in a moment of despair he made an attempt upon his own life; and when rescued by his friends from death, hastened to the celebrated monastery of La Trappe, where he proposed to withdraw from the world and take the vow of perpetual silence. This was about the time when the heroic struggle of the American states for independence first began to attract attention and awaken sympathy throughout Europe. All the efforts of La Rouërie's friends to rescue him from what they considered a living tomb were in vain, until they related to him the enthusiasm which reigned throughout Paris when news was received of the Roman steadiness of the Continental Congress; and that under the most adverse circumstances, and while the whole world regarded trans-atlantic liberty as in the last agonies of existence, Washington had accomplished the two brilliant achievements of Trenton and Princeton, over a numerous and hitherto victorious army. This information opened a new field for the young Frenchman's aspirations. He came out again into the world, declared himself a champion in the just cause of this weak and youth-

ful people, and with all the daring and enthusiasm which characterized the Paladins of romance, he took the earliest opportunity of reaching the shores of America.

He arrived here in the spring of 1777. Concealing his title and assuming for a surname his baptismal appellation of Armand, he presented himself at once to Congress, asking for employment. On the 10th of May he received from that body the rank of colonel, being, at his own request, commissioned to raise a partisan corps of Frenchmen consisting of horse and foot, and not exceeding in number two hundred. This was an undertaking which required the immediate outlay of large sums of money, and to procure the necessary funds he went to Boston where merchants made him such advances as he desired, and through whom he drew largely upon his property in France.

By the indefatigable industry of its commander the legion was soon raised in part, and when sufficiently trained to do service, its first employment seems to have been that of assisting to cover the frontiers of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Toward the end of the ensuing autumn, Armand happened to be with the detachment under General Greene who (accompanied by the marquis de la Fayette) was in New Jersey watching the movements of Lord Cornwallis, then on the east bank of the Delaware. The marquis had for some time been solicitous for active service and actual command, and this appears to have been the first occasion upon which he was gratified with the object of his wishes. Cornwallis was about sending his troops across the river at Gloucester when General Greene placed La Fayette at the head of a detachment consisting of about three hundred militia, one hundred and fifty riflemen and ten light dragoons, with permission, should circumstances warrant it, to attack the outposts of the British general. It was on the morning of the 25th of November that the young French general started to conduct his first military operation. He was accompanied upon this occasion by several of his fellow countrymen who volunteered to assist during the reconnaissance, among whom were the colonels Armand and Laumoy, and the chevaliers

Duplessis and Gimat. The day was spent in nothing more than a careful examination of the enemy's movements and position; but toward evening, the American detachment advanced and attacked with great spirit a post occupied by three hundred and fifty Hessians with field pieces. The Hessians, although reinforced at two different times, were pushed back upon their main body, and, unable to make head against their assailants, retired, until darkness put an end to the skirmish, which was extremely creditable to the American forces, militia as well as riflemen. "The conduct of our soldiers," to use the words of the marquis, "was above all praise." He does not specify the gallantry of the French officers who are said to have greatly exposed themselves in cheering forward the militia. In this, which was Armand's maiden essay in war, his horse was shot under him, and a slight wound which he received enabled him to carry off from the field one manifest token of a passage at arms.—Fourteen Hessian prisoners were taken in this affair, and the enemy's loss in killed and wounded was about forty-five or fifty, while that of the Americans was only seven.

During the spring and summer of 1778, he was assiduously engaged in drilling his legion and completing it to its numerical complement. In these preparations he was greatly assisted by Monsieur de Vienne, an officer of much experience, who had resigned his commission of captain in the French cavalry to join the armies of the United States. Armand's officers for the most part were his own countrymen. Of his privates the greater portion at this time were French or French Canadians, and the rest consisted of Brunswickers who had belonged to the convention troops of Saratoga, together with other continental Europeans picked up at different places by his recruiting agents.

In the latter part of the summer of '78, the legionary force thus formed consisted of about fifty horse and one hundred infantry. Constant practice (under the eyes of zealous and experienced officers) in field exercise and the use of arms, had rendered it very efficient, and it was now to stand opposed to the best partisan troops of the enemy. When the American

army was about to retire from White Plains toward the close of the campaign, it was foreseen that the whig farmers in the upper towns of Westchester would be liable to suffer much from the incursions of the British irregulars; and to protect the patriotic inhabitants, Armand was ordered to cross the Hudson and take post on the lines of the neutral ground.—The soldiers of the legion were well clothed and armed, the cavaliers well mounted, and in the month of September, the whole, in high spirits, followed their chivalrous leader to the field, where they remained at different out-posts, along the lines, until the ensuing winter. Armand's first position was at Bedford-new-Purchase, in the vicinity of North Castle Church. Afterward he was stationed along the high grounds east of Sing-Sing and Tarrytown which commanded a view of the Hudson, for the purpose of preventing intercourse between British vessels of war and the disaffected inhabitants. In this service he displayed great activity and address, and made prisoners of several parties of marines and sailors who ventured on shore. He was compelled however to be constantly on the alert while the active campaign lasted, for opposed to him and watching all his movements, were the lieutenant-colonels Simcoe, Tarleton and Emmerich, and major Bearmore,—undoubtedly the most daring and enterprising of all the partisans then in the enemy's service. The legion, consequently, was always kept ready for action. Sentinels posted in advance and numerous patrols rendered surprise difficult; the men never undressed, and the horses were constantly caparisoned. Tarleton's legion at length had withdrawn from the county and gone into winter quarters, and the Queen's Rangers were preparing to follow, when the French colonel determined to give his horsemen an opportunity of distinguishing themselves by an attack upon the out-post of the Green-Yagers, situate at Hadley's house, on the north river post-road, about a mile or more above colonel Wurmb's position near Kingsbridge. Armand put his men in motion at night, posted his infantry near Dobbs' Ferry to cover a retreat in case of pursuit, and at the head of his cavalry hastened to throw himself upon the Hessian guard. It was just



after daybreak when he approached the enemy. His spies had given the information that a single sentinel would be encountered on the road some distance in advance, and measures were taken accordingly. When this man came in view, the whole troop were ordered to charge with loud shouts and at full speed; a proceeding which surprised and disconcerted the sentinel to such a degree that he suffered himself to be disarmed and taken prisoner without discharging his musket. The French colonel then advanced in the same rapid manner with loud outcries upon Hadley's house where the picket guard was posted. Completely surprised, and not knowing the strength of their assailants, they were at once put to rout. Most of them were killed or wounded, some escaped, and several were taken prisoners. Having attained his object, he made a short circuit to mislead the Yager officers in their pursuit, and fell back upon his foot with all the speed that could be pricked into his horses. The whole enterprise was conducted with such skill and celerity that he regained his quarters near the head of Sleepy-Hollow, without molestation and without injury, except slight wounds received by two horsemen, although followed by the Hussars of the Queen's rangers and Emmerich's dragoons. His adroit movement at the commencement of his retreat induced the enemy to pursue so far in a false direction that they were unable to come up with him. Simcoe, the redoubtable commander of the Queen's rangers, lay at this time on the high grounds near Fordham church, and expressed great indignation when he found that Armand's horse had approached his very pickets. He made immediate preparations to attack the French colonel in his quarters, but before he could mature a project for the purpose, positive orders from the British commander-in-chief, compelled him, reluctantly to go into winter quarters at Jerico on Long-Island.

In the beginning of 1779, Armand was authorized to recruit in the different states, and the restriction which had confined his enlistments to foreigners was removed. During the winter and spring of this year his corps was completed and prepared for the coming campaign, for the most part in New

York and Massachusetts; and about the middle of June, when general Heath received orders to join the main army, preparatory to taking command of the troops on the east bank of the Hudson, the cavalry of the legion escorted him from Springfield to New Windsor. The whole corps, soon afterward, re-crossed the north river, and encamped for some time in Lower Salem, under general Robert Howe, being engaged, along with Glover's brigade, and Moylan's and Sheldon's horse, in shielding the country from the enemy's depredations; after which they again took post a short distance above Tarrytown to watch the British vessels and prevent intercourse with the shore. This service, for several reasons, the commander of the legion was now enabled to perform with much greater success than before. His force amounted to almost two hundred men, a numerical strength which it probably never afterward attained—about one third consisting of cavalry; he had become better acquainted with the country; many of his recruits came from the immediate vicinity; and two amuzettes or wall-pieces which carried balls of one pound and a half each to an extraordinary distance, were attached to the corps.

Toward the end of October he formed a plan to surprise and carry off major Bearmore, the celebrated commander of the Westchester Refugees, who was then quartered at the house of alderman Leggett, below Westfarms. Bearmore was a native of Throg's Neck, of humble parentage, but nature had given him a fine person, with great activity both bodily and mental, and the kind and liberal rector of St. Peter's, in the borough town of Westchester, had furnished him with a good education. Brought up in the church of England and trained in a school conducted by her clergy, he was inclined, when the revolutionary troubles commenced, to espouse the Royal cause, and accordingly, when in the autumn of 1776, the British light-infantry first appeared on Throg's Neck, he joined them as a volunteer. His general intelligence, knowledge of the country, and intrepidity soon attracted notice, and when the loyal refugees of Westchester, Dutchess and Connecticut were collected and embodied in the neighbourhood of Morris-



ania, he was appointed their major-commandant by the British commander-in-chief. Nothing could be more generally desirable than this enterprise projected by Armand. General Heath, in consequence, not only gave it his consent but offered to aid the attempt, and urged its immediate execution; for Bearmore's restless activity, frequent excursions and severity toward the determined whigs, had long rendered him an object at once of dread and dislike to the patriotic inhabitants.

The excursion for the same purpose of lieutenant colonel White with a strong detachment, in August, and several attempts subsequently made by those active and daring officers Heard and Gill, all, either wholly or in part, had proved unsuccessful; but these repeated failures served only to stimulate the ardor of the gallant Frenchman, who, on the 7th of November heard that the same officers were upon the eve of a new attack upon the British outposts. This information precipitated his designs, which he now resolved to accomplish during the night of the same day. He set off upon this enterprise at noon with one hundred infantry and about thirty horse, being the most effective part of his corps, and arrived at Williamsbridge soon after eight o'clock. Here he placed his infantry in a position where they might cover his retreat the most advantageously, and at the head of twenty well mounted dragoons, previously selected for the purpose, pushed with all possible speed for alderman Leggett's house three miles below. It was about nine o'clock, when they reached the quarters of the celebrated major-commandant of the Westchester Refugees. The house was immediately surrounded and the inmates summoned to surrender. Perceiving that effectual resistance could not be made, Bearmore surrendered upon the instant, with five of his corps. Besides these prisoners, the legionary cavalry bore off numerous trophies of their success, consisting of horses, arms and accoutrements. After securing these memorials of victory and mounting the prisoners, colonel Armand lost not a moment in falling back upon his main force at Williamsbridge, and then, with the whole detachment, retiring rapidly, he

regained his quarters unmolested and without the loss of a single man. This was considered by the writers of the day as an uncommonly bold and well conducted operation, and high encomiums were bestowed upon the colonel and his legion for the precaution, gallantry and discipline which they exhibited throughout the whole excursion. The danger of the enterprise will be manifest when it is known that Wurmb with his regiment of chasseurs, lay, at this time, on Tippet's hill, above Kingsbridge, and that Bearmore's quarters were four miles lower down than the Hessian out-guard; the German colonel consequently, by a march of little more than a mile, might have cut off the retreat of the legionary commander.

The news of Bearmore's capture was received with great joy throughout Westchester, Dutchess and the Connecticut borders. Those who had suffered from his depredations were extremely anxious that he should undergo capital punishment, or at least be retained as a close prisoner, upon the ground that the severities he had practised were not justified by military usage, and that some of the iniquities with which he was charged had been committed before he was regularly commissioned as an officer. These accusations however were probably much exaggerated. His exactions fell chiefly upon the whigs who acted warmly and openly in opposition to royalty, and such bold and decided persons who move hopefully in the van of revolution will be apt to undergo persecution from the government previously existing as they always have sustained it, while civil war endures. The refugee commandant accordingly, after a short detention, was released upon parole; but it appears that he was not exchanged so as to bear arms until the following summer. Meanwhile colonel James de Lancey who is said to have been jealous of the reputation acquired by Bearmore, came forward and took command of the Westchester refugees; a charge which during the war he never afterward relinquished.

His recent success at West Farms induced colonel Armand to make a second attack upon the refugee out-posts. He now determined to carry off colonel de Lancey from his

quarters at Morris' house in Fordham. This was an enterprise of much difficulty and danger, as the attempt would necessarily be made in the midst of the whole refugee force which was concentrated around their commander, several miles below the British outposts at Kingsbridge and West Farms, and in the immediate vicinity of Fort George situate upon Laurel-hill, on the west side of Harlem river. The perils, which seemed to await the movement, rendered it but the more acceptable to the officers of the legion when they were informed of what was in contemplation, and their colonel at once determined to strike at the refugee commander, trusting for safety in the rapidity of his advance and retreat. During the night of the 1st of December and on the eve of a snow storm, he moved with the greater part of his legion as before to Williamsbridge, and having posted his infantry in ambush a short distance south of that pass, galloped at the head of a troop of dragoons towards Morris' house. As he approached Kingsbridge it was daylight, and he took to the fields in order to avoid patrols and escape observation. Fences, in the vicinity, had long since disappeared before the presence of large armies; and the paths used for travel and other landmarks were now shrouded from view by a fresh carpet of snow that for some time had fallen very fast. It is not therefore surprising that the guides lost their way, notwithstanding they were well acquainted with the country. The air was so thick with descending flakes that the dragoons could see but a few yards around them, and in these moments of uncertainty they found it requisite to draw rein and move along with extreme caution. At length they met a countryman whom they pressed and mounted behind one of the horsemen. With some reluctance this man consented to pilot them toward their point of attack, but advised silence as they were approaching an out-guard, and then informed them that colonel de Lancey was in New York. The capture of this officer had been the main object of the enterprise, and Armand as he groped his way onward, was balancing in his mind the propriety of giving over his attempt, when an incident occurred which led instantly to that decision.

They came all at once upon a sentinel who hailed, and in a moment after fired and ran. Presently other shots followed and drums beat to arms. The commander instantly ordered his men to wheel about, and under the guide that fortune had sent them, they retreated at speed to Fordham village. Here the legionary colonel drew up his men upon a ridge, and finding from the prevailing silence that at least he was not very closely pursued, he advanced to the dwelling of Isaac Corsa who resided where St. John's college now stands, and was one of Bearmore's captains of infantry, and made prisoners of this officer and two of his men. The captain's son had seen the legion-horse as they were forming upon the ridge and gave the information to his father, who after looking at them attentively said they were Emmerick's dragoons. Colonel Armand then retired in safety with his prisoners.

In 1780, Armand received orders to join the southern army, previously to which the legion had been incorporated with the remains of Pulaski's corps, including the independent troop of captain Bedkin. It was about the middle of July when the French colonel joined the forces under major-general, the Baron de Kalb, at the encampment at Deep river in North Carolina, a few days before general Gates arrived and took the command. During the subsequent march to Clermont in South Carolina, Gates ordered the horses belonging to officers to be taken from them, in order to expedite the movement of his artillery through the wilderness: a proceeding which led to serious altercation with Armand, and before a reconciliation was effected the American commander determined upon a night march for the purpose of surprising his antagonist. On the 15th of August, a few hours before his troops were put in motion, Gates issued his general orders by which Armand was required to lead the advance at the head of his dragoons, and in case of attack by the British horse was positively directed to withstand the enemy's charge whatever might be their numbers. The officers and men of the legion had previously been in the worst possible humor with general Gates, ascribing to neglect on his part, the unusual and excessive service that had devolved upon them,



and the sickness they had suffered in consequence of bad quarters and scanty and unwholesome provisions. They now exclaimed loudly against the order of march as related to themselves, attributing it to resentment and a design to sacrifice them.—Their colonel equally displeased openly avowed the same opinion, seeming to think the positive directions respecting himself implied a doubt of his courage and declaring that cavalry had never before been put in the front of a line of battle *in the dark*.

At ten o'clock in the evening the American army was put in motion to surprise the hostile camp at Camden, and by a singular coincidence lord Cornwallis with his whole force marched upon Clermont about the same time for a similar purpose. The night was exceedingly dark, and the Americans had moved about half the distance between the adverse encampments, when about two o'clock in the morning they were made aware of the presence of an enemy by a heavy fire of musketry which suddenly poured in upon the head of the vanguard. As the colonel had apprehended, eight or ten of the dragoons were killed or wounded by this sudden attack. A charge from the British horse, with loud huzzas immediately followed. The legionary cavalry falling back upon the foot, threw the whole corps into confusion, and the recoil which occurred in front of an advancing column of infantry, produced general consternation throughout the whole line of the army.

The disastrous result of the engagement which ensued immediately after daylight on the ensuing morning is well known. In a vain attempt to rally the panic stricken militia, the cavalry of the legion became disordered, and in that state were charged and put to rout by a far superior body of the enemy's dragoons. Although the greatest efforts were made to keep the legionary soldiers together, not one half ever joined their colors at Hillsborough, which became their rallying point; all the rest having been either killed, captured or dispersed. Gates was unsparingly censured by most of his officers. "I will not assert," said Armand in the afternoon of the day on which the battle was fought, "that

we have been betrayed; but if it had been the purpose of the general to sacrifice his army, what could he have done more effectually to answer that purpose?"

In September the remains of the corps were sent to forage and prepare cantonments for the winter, while the colonel himself went to Philadelphia, and in the ensuing month of February embarked for France, with a determination to procure the means necessary for forming and equipping a new legion.

He returned in the following autumn with all the arms, accoutrements and money required for the purposes he had in view. It was twelve days after the combined armies of Washington and Rochambeau had passed through Philadelphia on their march to Yorktown, when Armand debarked at the former city. With all that remained of his legion, he then hurried after the allied forces, whom he joined before the beleagured town, in time to participate in the honors and successes that awaited the confederates. When on the night of the 14th of October, the redoubt upon the left of the enemy's lines was attacked and carried by a detachment under lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, Armand, with several of his officers, was along, having previously obtained permission to join the storming party. "Allow me the satisfaction," says Hamilton in his letter to LaFayette, "of expressing our obligations to colonel Armand, and also to captain Segonge, the chevalier de Fontivieux, and captain Bedkin, officers of his corps, who acting upon this occasion as volunteers, proceeded at the head of the right column, and entering the redoubt among the first, by their gallant example contributed to the success of the enterprise."

As soon as his corps had been sufficiently recruited, in February 1782, it was sent along with Lauzun's legion to join the southern army under Greene, which had been hitherto deficient in cavalry; but hostilities now languished as the war drew towards its end, and from this time forward Armand does not appear to have been actively employed. In the following March, congress appointed him to the rank of brigadier-general. He seems to have remained in this country



until the beginning of 1784. Washington, who took a lively interest in his restoration to royal favor, wrote in his behalf to some of the most prominent courtiers of Versailles, among whom were count Rochambeau and his old commander the duke de Biron, expressing a high opinion of his merits, mentioning in the most flattering terms his American military services, and commending him for promotion and employment in his own country. The consequence of this intercession was that on his return to Europe he was received with distinction; and rank and actual command, at once honorable and satisfactory, were assigned him in the French army.

In the years immediately succeeding the American war, when movements toward constitutional government first appeared in France, La Rouërie warmly favored the agitation, but at the same time opposed the entire subversion of the ancient institutions. He advocated great and general reforms in the nation and a proper limitation of the royal power. At the close of 1788, and in the beginning of the following year, when the states of Brittany assembled in convention at Rennes he took a prominent part in the tumultuous discussions which ensued and was appointed one of the twelve deputies who were sent to the king to remonstrate against the proceedings of the court, and to claim for his province the preservation of her ancient privileges. The intrepidity with which he proceeded to discharge his mission provoked the royal ministers, and he underwent in consequence an imprisonment in the Bastile. This proceeding gave him great popularity, and when set at liberty, he saw at once and with joy all the signs of approaching revolution.

He continued to favor most of the momentuous changes proposed by the court, until the States General were convoked, when he perceived intuitively that the privileged orders and the king would alike be engulfed in the enormous pretensions of the popular branch; and it was by his influence that the nobles of Brittany refused to send any deputies to the general meeting of the states. The sanguinary excesses which soon followed, made it daily more manifest that the cause of government and order were alike endangered, and from

this time, in order to preserve the throne, he stopped short in the career of innovation. From 1790, he became the hope of the malcontents of Brittany who rallied about him for the purpose of forming a royalist association. The leadership of this great party, to which station he was unanimously elected, was exactly suited to his ardent spirit and indefatigable activity, and he forthwith presented himself to the count d'Artois at Coblenz, to whom he submitted the plan of association. It was approved on the 5th of December 1791, and sanctioned by the king's brothers, and La Rouërie as the leading spirit of the confederation was charged with its management, civil and military. Upon his return, he commenced immediately with the execution of his plan. Royal committees were formed in St. Malo, Dol, Rennes, Fougères and all the principal towns. Accurate lists of such as had lost by the new order of things were made, for the purpose of exciting them to join the confederates. Throughout the whole province, emissaries devoted to the monarch found their way into the ports, custom houses, forts and arsenals, in effect, into all the departments and public establishments of the new government. Regulations civil and military were discussed and adopted at secret meetings of the conspirators, and everything was arranged for systematic action. Each commander of a district had under him subordinate chiefs who were charged with the military organization of the respective cantons confided to them; while La Rouërie, the soul who gave life to this vast complot, consecrated to it his days and nights, his fortune and his faculties. At length when all things were in readiness for a general outbreak, he became suspected by the new authorities who appeared unexpectedly at his chateau, every part of which was searched by a detachment of four hundred national guards, while the confederates escaped by subterraneous passages known only to themselves. After this occurrence he placed himself in a position to resist any unauthorized attack from the violent republicans who threatened his residence and property with destruction. For this purpose he drew around him a band of devoted followers whom he trained in military exercises on foot and on horseback, causing

them to mount guard by day and night for the protection of the castle. The bold attitude he thus assumed seemed to secure him from the outrage of a lawless multitude while the inhabitants of the neighboring towns and villages, the greater part of whom were now in his interests and opposed to the convention, never failed to give him the most exact information of what was passing; so that he was at all times prepared for domiciliary visits and other movements of the revolutionists.

Among the adventurous spirits who had joined the Breton association and who were the most devotedly attached to the daring chief that conducted it, were several officers who had served under him in the United States, together with major Chafner, an American gentleman of intrepidity and enterprise and one of his most intimate friends and admirers. Major Chafner had been deeply engaged in the conspiracy from its commencement. An important and active part in the drama was reserved for him, but in which he was not to appear until the breaking out of the insurrection.

The confederates were again ready to unfurl the royal banner, when some precipitate and unauthorized movements were made by their friends in Finisterre and the Ardèche. Immediately afterward, the catastrophe of the 10th of August occurred, and in the subsequent month the duke of Brunswick commenced his retreat.—These unpropitious events which followed close upon each other, discouraged the whole west of France then ready to break out into insurrection, and the rising of the royalists was consequently postponed although the organization was continued.

A combination so extensive as this, which comprised the whole of Brittany, and the greater part of La Vendée could not for any length of time remain concealed. Among the conspirators was Latouche-Cheftel, a young Breton physician residing in Paris who oppressed by the secrets confided to him faltered under their weight, and, after hesitating for some time, at length disclosed the whole plan to his friend, Danton, the most audacious of the revolutionists. Emissaries were now sent into Brittany for the purpose of arresting La Rouërie.

Although compelled to fly from the chateau, he refused to comply with the wishes of his friends who were anxious that for a while at least he should withdraw from the province. Disdaining retreat, he visited all the chiefs of the confederacy at their residences, passing from one to another for the purpose of arousing their spirits from despondency, and inspiring them with fresh hopes. In these perilous journeys, armed at all points, he wandered through fields and forests, and uniformly avoiding the highways and paths used by the peasantry, passed his nights in the most inaccessible places, never reposing twice in the same spot, but sleeping sometimes in caverns, sometimes at the foot of an oak and often at the bottom of a ravine. Meanwhile the insurrection had been postponed until the ensuing month of March when the moment for taking up arms was to be indicated by the descent of a party of royal emigrants upon the coast.

The revolutionary authorities at Paris acted upon this occasion with their accustomed energy. The Executive Council in concert with the Committee of General Safety dispatched into Brittany Laligant-Morillon, an agent in whom they reposed the most unbounded confidence, and to whom they gave unlimited powers for the purpose of securing the chiefs of the league and crushing the whole conspiracy. La Rouërie, now a wanderer and a fugitive, closely pursued by the officials of the convention; signalized in the journals of Rennes; denounced by the popular societies; compelled to inactivity during the winter, was impatient for the month of March, the time proposed for the development of the great enterprise. Long continued exposure at an inclement season of the year at length impaired his health, and he found it necessary to seek some friendly mansion where he might repose in safety and prepare for the approaching struggle. He chose for these purposes the chateau de Laguyomarais, near Lamballe, but he had scarcely gained the protection of that hospitable roof, when he was overtaken by a mortal malady. While the result of his disease was yet doubtful, news came of the king's execution. This unexpected catastrophe troubled his reason and formed the crisis of his fate. On the morning of the 30th



day of January, 1793, after a sickness of fourteen days, he expired in the delirium of a raging fever, at one moment mourning for the monarchy, and the next uttering imprecations against the revolutionary leaders.

At midnight, and without the aid of any light but that of the moon, a few chosen friends interred both his body and all the papers of the conspiracy, with the utmost secrecy in sequestered places. But all these precautions proved insufficient to preserve either the one or the other from discovery. Such was the activity of Morillon, the revolutionary agent, assisted by the traitor Latouche, that little more than a month had passed before the remains of the royalist chief were disinterred and the papers seized. These latter were found to implicate numerous individuals residing in the neighborhood and many of La Rouërie's nearest relatives and friends; but the great body of the conspirators remain to this day unknown, their role having fortunately been destroyed.—By Morillon's orders twenty seven persons, for the most part belonging to the noblest houses of Brittany, and among whom stood conspicuous the unfortunate families of Laguyomarais, and Desilles, by order of the convention were arrested and sent with all the papers to Paris for trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, just at that time instituted. Of the accused twelve were condemned to death, four of whom were females. They all perished on the same day, in the short space of thirteen minutes, and under the same guillotine.—The whole number remained calm while sentence was passed upon them and marched with firmness to the place of execution, refusing the assistance of the constitutional clergy whom they regarded as intruders. At the foot of the scaffold they all tenderly embraced, and most of them died shouting "*Vive le Roi!*" Among the victims was the chevalier de Fontevieux, one of the legionary officers who served under La Rouërie in the United States—a faithful adherent who cheerfully followed the fortunes of his old companion and leader. Major Chafner, the American conspirator had the good luck to escape. Angelica Desilles, a young lady of great gentleness and beauty, was condemned by mistake for her sister-in-law, for

whom, in consequence of similarity of name, she was taken. She refused to let the error be divulged to the Tribunal and died with serenity—a touching instance of heroic affection, which must for ever furnish a shining page for the dark annals of revolution.

In person, the marquis de la Rouërie was above the middle size, of athletic form and dark complexion. A celebrated writer of his own country who knew him well, says of him that “his appearance and manners were elegant, his air was manly, his face intelligent and pleasing”; and adds that “he resembled the portraits of the young noblemen of the League.” Educated from early life for the army, he was master of all those accomplishments in which it became a soldier to excel, and these he turned to good account in the formation of his American legion. He was a practised marksman with the rifle and pistol; used the sword with equal skill whether on foot or in the saddle, and in dexterous and elegant horsemanship has seldom been surpassed.

On his first arrival in America he laid aristocracy aside as a garment unsuited to the climate, and conforming at once to republican manners, so effectually concealed the advantages of his birth, that some of his intimates never knew of his title until near the conclusion of the revolutionary contest. Hence he was always known here only as *Colonel or General Armand*. After mastering the English language, he associated much among the country people with whom, in consequence of his affability and sprightliness, he became uncommonly popular. The urbanity of his manners induced many youths from the upper towns of Westchester to join his legion, and among the pilgrims of life yet left in that county, when this paper was written, one or two old associates still lingered who lamented the untimely death of the generous Frenchman and who never speak of him but in the voice of praise and affection.

He always took a lively interest in the prosperity of the states in which he had freely expended his private income, and to whose service he had devoted some of the best years of his life. During the agitations which accompanied the creation and adoption of our Federal constitution, he continued to



show, both in conversation and letters, extreme solicitude for the success of the great experiment. It may be worthy of remark that of all our different inhabitants, the people of Massachusetts seem to have impressed him the most favorably. He always spoke of their kindness, intelligence and liberality in terms of gratitude and admiration. "I went to Boston," he used to say, "an entire stranger and destitute of means, yet, while sojourning there, I was not only received and entertained with more genuine hospitality than I ever experienced elsewhere, but the merchants of the city, from time to time, then and afterward, advanced all such moneys as I required, solely upon my promise that I would, at some future day, repay them."

La Rouërie possessed quick parts, a lively wit and great eloquence, both for conversation and formal discourse. A seven years' residence in the United States, which tempered and gave stable and distinctive qualities to his youthful character, is acknowledged by his admirers as the first cause of his celebrity. The ardor with which he embarked in the chief undertakings of his life seemed to lighten up a corresponding enthusiasm in all who came within the sphere of his influence; but he united also to this vehement earnestness, a grand and elevated character which combined all the talents requisite for negotiation, with the extended views of a general and the intrepidity of a soldier. These characteristics were fully shewn in the formation and conduct of the vast conspiracy which disclosed itself after his death and of which he was the projector. At the time of his passion for the celebrated actress he was very young, and the subsequent course of a busy life spent in seeking honorable distinction where liberty and duty led the way, fully demonstrates the problem, that the greatest capacity for active life is not inconsistent with the strongest susceptibility. Although in common with most of his countrymen who had served here, he zealously favored the most extensive reforms at home, and even upon its first appearance welcomed the approach of the revolution which swept over his native land, yet he opposed with zeal the total subversion of the ancient Gallic institutions, avowing himself an advocate

for royal government limited by parliamentary representations both popular and aristocratic, and equally removed from absolute monarchy on the one hand and anarchy on the other. The tyranny of the demagogues of Paris and the frantic excesses of the people afterward convinced him that honor and duty called for active support to the tottering edifice of royalty; and thenceforward, while life remained, he continued to rally up the royalists of Brittany and La Vendée for a struggle against anarchy. Although among those with whom he then acted many were his equals in rank and some his superiors, yet all, recognizing his remarkable abilities, submitted cheerfully to his guidance, and spoke of and considered him to the last, as a man born to command. In his writings, Washington repeatedly bears testimony to the extraordinary merits and devotedness of the French legionary commander. The fact that he secured the confidence and friendship and received the praises of one who rarely uttered eulogy and was never mistaken in his estimate of men, cannot fail to add much, always, to the weight of La Rouërie's reputation. His correspondence with Washington was carried on almost to the end of his life. One of the last communications known to have passed between him and the great American commander, consisted of an introductory letter in behalf of Chateaubriand which that distinguished statesman, then in the hey-day of youth, presented at Philadelphia on the occasion of his visit to this country in 1791. The untimely departure of the marquis de la Rouërie was long and deeply lamented by his associates; and history, in times to come, while she records the heroic courage and romantic devotion that marked his career, will place him high in the roll of chivalry, along with the purest and loftiest specimens of the ancient French noblesse.

## CHAPTER III

### CAPTURE OF POUNDRIDGE

After Sir Henry Clinton had retired from the posts of Stoney Point and Verplank's, about the 18th day of June 1779, he established his head-quarters at Philipsburgh in the county of Westchester. Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton of the legion, was at this time panting for distinction. He had obtained the most accurate information of the strength of the American troops stationed at Poundridge and commanded by Colonel Sheldon of the second regiment of light-dragoons. After much solicitation, the British commander-in-chief, for the purpose of surprising this advanced post, intrusted the Legionary lieutenant colonel with a detachment carefully selected from the light troops of the army. Having obtained leave to make the attempt, Tarleton at once hastened to its execution.

The American forces at Poundridge consisted of about one hundred light dragoons of the Second regiment and a small party of militia. The cavalry and infantry both, were quartered in the village; the latter being under the immediate command of Major Lockwood. Major Leavenworth, with about one hundred Continental troops and the same number of militia, pursuant to orders, had taken up a position on the most southerly of the two roads leading to Bedford, about a mile west of the head-quarters of Colonel Sheldon, who was in command of all the out-guards posted in this vicinity. Lockwood, who lived in the village of Poundridge, was First-major in Colonel Thomas' regiment of Westchester militia. With patriotic earnestness, he shared the comforts of his residence with Sheldon, who had made it his head-quarters, and whose horsemen were cantoned in the barns and out-buildings of the farm. It was well known to the King's officers that Colonel

Moylan's dragoons had long been expected at Poundridge where it was said they were to unite with Sheldon; and the surprise and destruction of these two cavalry regiments, formed the great object of Tarleton's ambition.

On the evening of the 1st day of July, about half an hour before midnight and in the midst of a storm of uncommon violence, Tarleton started upon his enterprise. The point from which he took his departure was the camp on the Bronx near Milesquare, occupied by the British advanced guard. A less determined leader would have shrunk from seeking a passage-at-arms with an antagonist, who could not be reached until after a fierce struggle with the elements. The royal detachment consisted of seventy of the Seventeenth regiment of light dragoons, part of the legion-cavalry and infantry, the Hussars of the Queen's rangers, some Yager light horse, and some of the Westchester refugees: in all, about three hundred men. The whole of the party, infantry as well as cavalry, were unusually well-mounted. The horses of the Seventeenth and of the legion were superb. The former were the best that remained of the finely trained chargers brought over from England and Ireland two years previously and both Lord Cathcart and his lieutenant Tarleton, had been at great pains and expense in selecting and drilling the latter.

It had been Tarleton's intention to reach Poundridge before day-light, but the severity of the storm retarded his progress. When he reached the Old Northcastle Church, which stood upon the borders of Bedford, it was half past three o'clock in the morning. There he made a brief halt, in order to procure further details of the American strength and position. When he resumed his march, the weather was still dreadful. He pricked forward however with speed through wind and rain, and at Bedford village, took the northern of the two roads leading to Poundridge. As he approached this last place, his guide in front inquired of a farmer, who was standing in the door of his house, respecting the shortest route to Sheldon's head-quarters. Mistaking the husbandman's directions, when about three quarters of a mile from Poundridge Church, at a place where the road forks, the guide pressed forward upon the



straight branch which leads to Ridgefield, instead of taking that which turns abruptly to the right. Before this blunder was disclosed to the commanding officer by another guide, the British forces had gone half a mile out of their way, and were seen and examined by one of Sheldon's videttes.

Sheldon meanwhile, was not entirely unapprised of the approaching danger. The Committee of Safety had long maintained a spy at West-Farms, within the enemy's lines; upon whom, under a fictitious name, our great novelist has conferred a species of immortality. Luther Kinnicutt, the secret agent alluded to, was a person who about this time did the State good service, playing with great address and for a long time, the part of a *British*, but performing assiduously all the duties of an *American* spy. This man, in the course of his communications with the British officers, had the address to draw from them the fact, that an attempt was about to be made upon the post at Poundridge. He did not know the precise day fixed upon for the attack, but had clearly ascertained their intentions, and he well knew the hostile feelings that Major Lockwood's activity had excited among the Westchester refugees. Under pretense of obtaining information for the King's service, he, on one of the last days of June, went on foot and in disguise, mostly through the fields, to Poundridge, where he communicated to Sheldon and Lockwood, the designs of the enemy. This information appeared so correct and was given with such earnestness, that Lockwood determined to withdraw his family from the village, and they, on the instant, commenced preparations for a removal. When about to leave their home, they were dissuaded from their purpose by Colonel Sheldon, who urged them to await the termination of the storm just then impending and quieted the alarm of the females by confident assurances that no enemy, on such a night would venture far abroad for hostile purposes. The family however, sat up all night, dressed in their ordinary apparel, and determined upon leaving their home on the following morning.

Sheldon was not an officer to be closely approached unawares, and Kinnicutt's report had probably rendered him more than



usually circumspect. At any rate, his men were in harness all night long, ready to spring to their saddles on the first alarm. Their horses, fully caparisoned, sustained the pelting of the storm while picketed in order, to a fence, which extended east to the village Church, and ran behind that building westerly to head-quarters.

It was now some time after sunrise. Colonel Sheldon had just ordered his regimental horses to be unsaddled and turned loose into an adjacent field, according to custom, preparatory to their being dressed and fed; when a vidette came in at speed, and reported a large body of cavalry advancing rapidly upon the northern road from the direction of Bedford. As it was known that the Third regiment of American dragoons had crossed the Hudson three days previously; Sheldon said at once, "It must be Moylan's horse then." However, the orders just issued were countermanded and the late General Tallmadge of Litchfield, then a major under Sheldon, was sent out with a small detachment, to reconnoitre. Meanwhile the dragoons, who had been under arms all night, were ordered to mount and make ready; and such preparations were made, either to welcome friends or fight with enemies, as a few moments of suspense rendered possible.

Tallmadge at the head of his men, had galloped forward about half a mile. Just as he had reached the summit of a short hill which commands a view of the road in front, previously hidden from observation, he found himself within pistol-shot of the British van-guard, consisting of troopers belonging to the Seventeenth light dragoons. The leading officer of the enemy called upon him to surrender, and in the same breath gave the command: "Charge men, charge." Major Tallmadge and his men had barely time to wheel about, when their adversaries were upon them, and both parties riding for life or death, entered the village at the same moment; the pursuers filling the air with shouts, execrations, and calls for submission, and making a headlong onset upon the American troops now drawn up in the principal village street. The militia, who had just taken up a position to support the horsemen, wavered. Part of them broke and fell back upon Major

Leavenworth, but the cavalry remained firm. Sheldon's men withstood the charge, and then, in turn, became assailants. The hostile cavaliers thereupon became mixed up together, and a scene of wild disorder ensued, where individuals, for several minutes, fought hand to hand, until the British commander, with the main body of his forces, appeared upon the ground. The rest of the militia now fled in different directions. Tarleton made instant preparations for a charge in front, while his infantry was moving upon the American flanks to prevent escape; but Sheldon, when he perceived himself outnumbered and about to be surrounded, commanded an immediate retreat. The adverse trumpets sounded at the same moment their shrill notes, which rising above the din of battle, indicated to the respective antagonists, flight and pursuit. The route of the fugitives lay southerly, upon the highway to Stamford. About three fourths of a mile from Poundridge, Major Lockwood, followed by a few of the dragoons, took the road which there branches off to New Canaan; but almost entirely, the main bodies, pursued and pursuers, still held on toward Stamford. The hunters continued to follow their game for more than three miles. Notwithstanding their forced march of more than thirty miles, such was the superior mounting of Tarleton's followers, that the foremost of them kept up, during that whole distance, with the rearmost of the Americans. The chase presented a succession of individual conflicts. Some of the retreating dragoons got rid of their pursuers by pulling up for a moment and engaging in combat, while a few abandoned their horses and fled to the woods; and four or five surrendered.

Instances of individual coolness and courage occurred during this flight, which still live in the memory of the neighbouring inhabitants. A dragoon named John Buckout, from Philipse Manor, was closely followed up by one of the Seventeenth, and repeatedly called upon to surrender. By dint of spurring, the fugitive was just able to keep out of reach of his pursuer's sabre. The red-coat finding that he could not reach his quarry with the sword, drew a pistol and discharged it at Buckout's head. The ball perforated his cap, grazing the scalp on one side of his

head, but doing no farther injury. "There," cried out the King's trooper, "you d . . . d rebel, a little more, and I should have blown your brains out." "Yes," replied Buckout, turning round in the saddle, and calling out to the extent of his lungs; "Yes, but you are a bad shot: a little more and you wouldn't have touched me." Buckout continued to urge his steed forward, and escaped without additional hurt. Jared Hoyt of Stamford, another private, was fiercely pressed by one of the Legionary officers, who finding curses and calls for submission of no avail, got within striking distance, and then with his utmost might, aimed a blow at the head of the retreating horseman. The stroke was in part parried by Hoyt, who held his sword at guard, over his head. The blow however, had sufficient force left to cut through the horse-hair with which his helmet was ornamented. In the irritation of the moment he checked the speed of his horse and at the same instant, without giving his adversary time to recover, gave him a back-handed sword-stroke which passed through his mouth; cutting him nearly from ear to ear, and putting an effectual period to his vociferation.

The enemy's trumpets now sounded the recall. When the chase was discontinued, the militia began to re-assemble, and taking advantage of trees and fences, fired upon the royal horsemen whenever opportunity offered. Tarleton was disappointed in the unimportant results of a cherished enterprise, and irritated by the attacks of the militia. On his return to the village, he ordered Major Lockwood's house to be set on fire and refused to allow a removal of any part of the furniture, although several of his own officers warmly interceded for the preservation of the dwelling. During the flight and pursuit, such of both parties as had been wounded, were brought there, where two surgeons who accompanied the royal troops remained, for the purpose of dressing their wounds. These professional companions asked that the American Major's house, thus converted into a temporary hospital, might be spared; but Tarleton was inexorable. The wounded were removed. The house, which contained the baggage of Sheldon's regiment, was then burnt to the ground. Major

Tallmadge, upon this occasion, lost a fine horse, together with his field equipments. They were in charge of his servant, who after having been wounded, was obliged to dismount and run for the woods, that he might not be taken prisoner. Similar losses were sustained by other officers.

After the first appearance of the British detachment, Major Leavenworth had been assiduously engaged in rallying the neighbouring militia. The inhabitants turned out with alacrity. Finding himself now at the head of a force of nearly four hundred men; Leavenworth made ready to cut off the enemy's retreat. For this purpose, he took post near the southern of the two roads between Bedford and Poundridge, supposing the hostile forces would retire by that way, but being prepared at the same time, upon the first indication of their taking the other route, to cross the fields and intercept them there. He felt assured, if this latter movement should become necessary, that a rapid march would enable him to effect it.

Tarleton now collected his scattered forces, his wounded and his prisoners, together with all the cattle belonging to the Lockwood's. He then set fire to the Church, and had just given directions to set fire to the dwelling house of Major Lockwood's brother, when information was brought that Leavenworth was moving toward him, at the head of a strong force. He thereupon, with characteristic promptness, put his followers in marching order, and caused them to retire by the same way they had advanced. With his rear-guard, he then made a feint of retreating by the south road, where the American infantry were awaiting him. But after amusing them for a while, he galloped briskly along the northern route. The moment the direction of his retreat was ascertained, Leavenworth moved across the fields to gain the upper road, before his antagonist should have passed over it, but the endeavour was unsuccessful.

As the King's soldiers passed the residence of Crawford, the farmer of whom they had inquired their way in the morning, and who, as they supposed, had purposely misdirected them; some of the party set fire to his house. This was a great mistake, as he and his family were devoted friends of the Crown.



When they reached Bedford, the British forces made a short halt. Here they burnt the house occupied by Benjamin Hays, a noted tavern keeper, whose whiggery had rendered him extremely obnoxious to the Tories. This man was uncle to the celebrated High-Constable, long known in New York as "*Old Hays*." Meanwhile some of the militia by dint of running, had arrived at the village, and from behind the fences and houses, commenced firing upon the enemy. Tarleton now resumed his retreat. To retaliate however, for this last attack of the militia, he set fire, as he left, to the Presbyterian Church; but retired so precipitately, that the flames were extinguished soon after, by the inhabitants.

The Refugees had collected and brought off from Poundridge and the vicinity, the cattle belonging to obnoxious persons; such as were warmly opposed to the royal cause. But on leaving Bedford, finding that these droves retarded his movements, the British commander ordered them to be left behind.

A short distance below Bedford, Leavenworth was joined by Colonel Sheldon, who had rallied the greater part of his regiment; and the pursuit of the Royalists was thereupon continued beyond Northcastle Church. The retreat of the enemy however was so rapid, that the Americans were unable to overtake them.

Colonel Sheldon in his report to General Heath, admits the loss of one corporal, one trumpeter, and eight privates wounded; three sergeants, one corporal, four privates, and twelve horses missing. The men and horses reported as missing, were probably captured. The American dragoons who were made prisoners, are said to have been all wounded. Of the enemy, says Sheldon, two were killed and four made prisoners, the wounded being uncertain. Four horses also, were captured from the British, and one killed. The standard of the regiment having been left in Major Lockwood's house when the dragoons suddenly turned out, was taken; and this and also some helmets, arms, and accoutrements, were carried off by the enemy as trophies.

During his retreat, Tarleton took off eight or ten of the



inhabitants, who were known to be the most actively opposed to the Crown. Among them were the following persons, viz. Alsop Hunt, a son-in-law of Major Lockwood; Andrew Mills, an old man belonging to Bedford, who while endeavouring to conceal his musket in some secure place, was found with the weapon in his hands; two or three of the Poundridge people named Hill, and one of the Van Tassels of Philipse Manor, a race celebrated for fighting propensities. Mills was liberated through the intercessions of his daughter with the royal commanders. Most of the prisoners however, underwent a long confinement, in the notorious Sugar-House.

Tarleton, in his letter to Sir Henry Clinton, estimates Sheldon's regimental loss, in killed, wounded and prisoners, at twenty six or twenty seven; and of the militia he says, that fifteen were killed, wounded or taken. This must be over-rated. His own loss, which he makes one hussar of the legion killed, one wounded, and one horse of the Seventeenth dragoons killed, is undoubtedly much underrated. He probably made no return of the losses sustained by the irregulars under his command.

It may be well to record whatever may redound to the credit of an enemy whose conduct too often and too justly was charged with inhumanity. After Tarleton's retreat from Poundridge, one of the British surgeons continued for some time in the village, for the purpose of taking care of some American soldiers, whose wounds required immediate attention. This medical officer, is still gratefully spoken of by the inhabitants, for his assiduity and skill.

Tarleton regained his quarters in Milesquare, at about half past ten in the evening, after one of the most rapid marches upon record.

As the name of this celebrated British partisan must forever live in our revolutionary history, I will conclude my paper with a brief sketch of his life.

Banaster Tarleton was born on the 21st of August 1754, at Liverpool, of which city, his father was at one time the Mayor. This gentleman long importuned his son to study for the profession of law, but found that youthful ambition con-

stantly urged him to the career of arms. The parent thereupon wisely deferred his wishes to the military inclinations of the child, for whom, in 1775, he procured a cornetcy in the King's dragoon-guards. In the following year, the young soldier obtained leave to push his fortunes by joining the royal forces in America, where the revolutionary struggle had just commenced. Eager for distinction, he volunteered immediately after his arrival to serve under Colonel Harcourt of the Sixteenth light dragoons, and in the month of December, commanded the advanced guard of the detachment, which made General Charles Lee prisoner, near Baskingridge in New Jersey. During the two following years, he witnessed most of the actions that took place in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. On the retreat of the King's forces in June 1778 from Philadelphia to Sandy Hook, Tarleton's reputation for activity and vigilance had become such, that although possessing only the rank of captain, Sir Henry Clinton placed under his command, the rear-guard of the army. His conduct upon this occasion, gained him the favor of the British general. A few days after he was appointed Lieutenant-colonel of provincial cavalry. In August, he took command as Lieutenant-colonel of the British legion, then posted on Fordham Heights, near Kingsbridge, and in the immediate vicinity of Emmerich's corps and the Queen's rangers. These three bodies of light troops were at this time under the immediate command of Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe. On the last day of August, Simcoe with the whole of his troops, ambuscaded the Stockbridge Indians, under their chief, Nimham, as they were marching along the Milesquare road in the Lower Yonkers, for the purpose of attacking the royal outposts. They were accompanied and supported upon this occasion, by a small detachment of Continental troops under Major Stewart and by some Westchester volunteers under Captain Daniel Williams. During the onset of the King's forces, the Americans escaped, without loss; but the Indians, furiously charged by Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton at the head of the Legion dragoons and Queen's rangers' hussars, were driven down the descending ground in the vicinity of Van Cortland's woods and

cut to pieces. They fought however with great gallantry, pulling some of the cavalry soldiers from their horses. Tarleton himself, had a narrow escape. In leaning forward, so as to strike with force at one of the fugitives, he lost his balance and fell from his horse. Luckily, the Indian was not furnished with a bayonet, and his musket had been discharged. He turned however, upon his assailant, who lay stretched upon the ground, and whom he was about to dispatch with the butt-end of his firelock. At this moment, Murphy, a dragoon belonging to the Legion, galloped forward and saved his commander. The Stockbridge Chief himself fell in this attack, and near forty of his followers were either killed or wounded.

On the 16th of the next month, Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe, with the British light troops and some Hessian Yagers, surprised the American advanced post, commanded by Colonel Gist, near Philipse Manor-house; upon which occasion, Tarleton commanded the cavalry.

Soon after, he attacked an American picket in King Street and captured a small party of Sheldon's light dragoons.

When the campaign of 1779 opened, Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton was again in Westchester. On the 3d of June, at the head of the Legion dragoons, he crossed the Croton and beat up the quarters of an American party four miles further on, taking a few prisoners. Three weeks afterward, all the cavalry of the British and Hessian light troops were placed under his command. With these forces he crossed the Croton some distance above Pinesbridge, and having made a long detour, moving first easterly, then northerly, and at last westerly; he suddenly came upon the American posts at Delavan's Mills and Crompond, both of which he captured, taking Captain Honeywell and forty seven men prisoners.

Tarleton's next exploit was the Poundridge affair. During the months of July, August, and September, he made repeated attempts against Moylan's regiment of dragoons then in Westchester, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Anthony Walton White; whom he once surprised at Roundhill on the borders of Connecticut. But the caution and address of

this American cavalry officer were such, that his followers, at this time, sustained no material loss.

Toward the close of December, when Sir Henry Clinton moved southerly, with a considerable part of his army, for the siege of Charleston and other operations in the Carolinas, the Lieutenant-colonel of the Legion accompanied him and was placed in command of the British cavalry.

Tarleton's active career at the South is too well known to all readers of American history, for any detail upon the present occasion. At Lenude's Ferry he surprised his old Westchester antagonist, Colonel White, who escaped captivity, by swimming his horse across the Santee. At the battle of Guilford Court House, the commander of the British Legion lost a considerable part of his right hand in single combat, as is generally said, with Lieutenant colonel William Washington.

After the surrender of Yorktown, Tarleton returned home, and was received with enthusiasm in his native county; where in several places, the citizens took the horses from his carriage and drew him through the streets. Subsequently, he wrote and gave to the world his "History of the campaigns of 1780 and 1781, in the Southern Provinces of North America." The achievements commemorated in this publication, the sight of his maimed hand, and the constant activity and heartiness of his disposition rendered him popular; particularly with his townsmen of Liverpool, who, in 1790, returned him to Parliament. At the close of 1798, he was sent as Major-general to Portugal, and afterward as Lieutenant-general to Ireland, where, for some time, he was second in command. At a later time, he was recalled to England, where for six years, he had command of the Severn district. He obtained the rank of general in 1812 and was afterward created a Baronet.

He sat, for twenty two years, in the House of Commons, as one of the members from Liverpool, during which time he took a decided part in important questions, speaking not unfrequently, always with characteristic vehemence, and generally siding with the opposition.

When in 1791, a motion for the abolition of the African slave trade, was made in the House of Commons, it was



opposed with very considerable ability by Tarleton, and defeated. Among the philanthropists who anxiously watched the progress of this great measure, was William Allen, a distinguished member of the Society of Friends. The honest quaker, whose heart was set upon a suppression of this traffic in human beings, speaks, in his diary, with great bitterness of Tarleton's opposition to the motion. "This man," he says, "I hear, boasts that he has killed more men with his own hand, than any man in England. The words of Blair seem *peculiarly* applicable to him."

"Behold the sturdy man-destroying villain."

General Sir Banastre Tarleton died in Shropshire, on the 23d of January 1833, at the age of seventy eight. His career in desultory warfare, may be said to have commenced in our county of Westchester, where, for two successive summers, he exhibited remarkable courage and activity. His egotism may be excused, when in reporting the Poundridge affair to Sir Henry Clinton, he boasts of having fought an action, and passed over sixty four miles, in twenty three consecutive hours. Some of his marches at the South were, perhaps, still more extraordinary. The disastrous overthrow he underwent at the Cowpens, deprived him of the prestige he had gained, of being always accompanied by victory. Notwithstanding this defeat, he was again, in a few days after, at the head of his cavalry and in the midst of enterprise.

During his campaigns at the North, Tarleton does not appear to have been ever charged with cruelty. The incendiary barbarities which characterized the Poundridge excursion, were known to have been dictated by his superiors. When, however, he was transferred to the Southern department, his exactions, and severities were such, as drew upon him, from the people of Virginia and the Carolinas, the most unmitigated hatred. During the siege of Yorktown he commanded the neighboring post of Gloucester, where he was blockaded by Brigadier-general de Choisy at the head of a strong detachment of the combined forces. This post was delivered up on the same day that Cornwallis surrendered. "Previous to the surrender," says the celebrated Henry Lee in his memoirs,



"Tarleton waited upon General Choisy and communicated to that officer his apprehensions for his personal safety, if put at the disposal of the American militia. This conference was sought, for the purpose of inducing an arrangement which should shield him from the vengeance of the inhabitants. General Choisy did not hesitate a moment in gratifying the wishes of Tarleton. The legion of Lauzun and the corps of Mercer were selected by the General to receive the submitting enemy, while the residue of the allied detachment was held back in camp."

Tarleton was the most successful, and perhaps the ablest partisan officer, Great Britain has produced. In person, he is said to have been scarcely above the middle size, although when in the saddle, he seemed much taller. His physical conformation was robust, with large muscular limbs, but all his movements indicated uncommon activity. His eyes were black and piercing, his complexion dark, and his appearance on horseback imposing. His strategy, simple, but almost always successful, consisted in surprising his antagonist, coming upon him often from the most unexpected quarter, and charging home, without a moment's suspense. Although his manner of attack was generally the same, and his audacity, and the celerity of his advances were well known yet to the last, he almost always appeared before his adversary unexpectedly. His military character may be summed up, in these few words.—Great personal intrepidity,—incessant restlessness,—and unparalleled rapidity of movement.

## CHAPTER IV

### COLONEL DELANCEY'S FINAL DEPARTURE FROM WESTCHESTER

It had now been long evident, that the war was drawing to a close, and those Whigs whom civil strife had driven into voluntary exile, had been for some time returning. The refugees from above and the loyalists in general who had been active supporters of the crown were busied with preparations to leave their native country for the purpose of seeking new homes in the wilderness of Nova Scotia. Although to these the Government of Britain lent its aid with no stinted hand, yet when they came to abandon the land of their fathers, it was with saddened spirits and "lingering looks behind," like those who underwent the primeval banishment from Eden. Among the most reluctant of the exiles was the celebrated commander of the "Westchester Refugees." The Commonwealth of New York had withdrawn from him her protection (by a formal act of her Legislature), had declared his estate, real and personal to be forfeited to the people, had banished him forever, and, in case of his return to the State at any future time, declared him thereby guilty of felony and sentenced him to death without benefit of clergy. Yet notwithstanding his attainder and the approaching relinquishment of royal authority, he had clung to his early home with all the fondness of an infant for the bosom of its mother, and that too, long after a further stay had become dangerous. Of all the Tories he was the most obnoxious to the violent Whigs and when, by common consent, a cessation of active hostilities took place, individual enterprise had made more than one effort to carry him off.— From some of these attempts he had narrowly escaped; but the British out-posts in Westchester were now about to be with-

drawn and personal safety compelled him to seek another abode.

It was on a brilliant morning in one of the last days of April, that Colonel James Delancey took his final departure from West Farms. A bright vernal sun gilded hill and plain, birds sang their native hymns, and early flowers were beginning to bloom. Nature seemed to revel in the freshness and beauty of infancy. Under such circumstances the youthful heart beats high. Even the weary pilgrim of life while approaching his journey's end can sometimes pause to look upon a scene like this and for a moment, fancy himself rejuvenated. But the welcome sounds and cheerful sights that move in the pageant of Spring awakened no responsive feelings in the Outlaw of the Bronx, who with a heavy heart mounted his horse, and riding to the dwellings of his neighbors, bade them each farewell. The last upon whom he called, though much his senior in years, had been a friend and associate from early life, and was just returned to the farm which civil dissension had compelled him, for a while, to abandon. "Hunt," said the Colonel. "I have called to bid you good-bye—I hope you may prosper." "I don't know how that will be," answered the husbandman,—“Peace, it is true, has come at last; but I am now a poor man with a large family to provide for. My cattle have all been stolen, my negroes have run away, my fences are burnt up, and my house and barns in ruin. Of all my property nothing now remains but naked fields,—I don't know *how* I shall get along.” “Say no more,” replied Delancey. “Look at *me*. *You* can remain here and cultivate your lands in quiet, while *I* must leave my native country—never to return.” As he spoke these prophetic words, he turned in the saddle and gazed once more over Bronxdale, which in all its beauty lay full before him. His paternal fields and every object presented to his view were associated with the joyful recollections of early life. The consciousness that he beheld them all for the last time, and the uncertainties to be encountered in the strange country to which banishment was consigning him, conspired to awaken emotions, such as the sternest bosom is sometimes compelled

to entertain. It was in vain that he struggled to suppress feelings which shook his iron heart. Nature soon obtained the mastery, and he burst into tears. After weeping with uncontrollable bitterness for a few moments, he shook his ancient friend by the hand; ejaculated with difficulty the words of benediction, "God bless you Theophilus,"—and spurring forward, turned his back forever upon his native valley.

CHAPTER V  
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION  
BY JUDGE CALEB TOMPKINS<sup>1</sup>

(Found among the McDonald papers in the Library of the New York Historical Society and probably written for Mr. McDonald's use.)

All that I know about the ancestry of my Father, is what I have heard from him; that in the early settlement of Westchester County, three Brothers emigrated to this County, from England, and purchased the whole or greater part of what is now the town of Eastchester. From that time, I know nothing of their descendants down to the Father of Jonathan G. Tompkins, who owned a very valuable farm at Westchester, bordering on the sound. Being somewhat Involved, he exchanged farms with a Brother of his, who owned the farm in Scarsdale, where James Varian and family resided previous to the Revolution and since to the present time. He then removed to a house at the junction of the road (leading to Mamaroneck) with the post road to White Plains, where Jonathan G. Tompkins was born, and was named Joshua after his Father, and where his Father died. When he was about four years old, Capt. Jonathan Griffen who lived near by, took a fancy to him, and he was bound to him by Indenture until he was 21 years old, to learn the farming business, which Indenture I have seen and read. After he was 21 Capt. Griffen having no children of his own, adopted him as his son and had him baptized by the name of Jonathan Griffen. From that time and for several years

<sup>1</sup> "Caleb Tompkins was first judge of the Westchester County Court of Common Pleas from 1808 to 1820 and again from 1823 to 1846. He died January 1, 1846, aged eighty-six years and nine days. He was buried at White Plains. Mr. Tompkins was a learned jurist and a man of great abilities. He possessed in an eminent degree, the gifts and virtues for which the Tompkins family has ever been noted." Scharf, Vol. I., p. 528.



previous, he had the sole management of the farm and of all Capt. Griffen's business. Shortly after his Apprenticeship expired, he married the daughter of Caleb Hyatt, a respectable farmer and a justice of the peace in the town of White Plains. He resided with Capt. Griffen until about three years before the Revolutionary war, and until he had Eight children born of which I, was the eldest. Capt. Griffen conveyed to him one hundred acres of land without either buildings or orchard. He rented a house of Thomas Vail for one year, on the farm adjoining his own, where Daniel D. Tompkins was born June 21st 1774, and which after Vail's death he purchased, whereon I have resided for the last 50 years. The house and barn on this one hundred acres (conveyed by Capt. Griffen) was built during the year my Father resided in Vail's house. He resided in the house he built until about a week before the battle at White Plains, when the family were removed to John Cromwells near the Friends Meeting house in Harrison. The day before the battle, the family removed to South Salem, now called Lewisborough.

#### THE CAPTURE OF DELANCY'S OUTPOST

(This is entitled "From Caleb Tompkins' Papers" and appears on pp. xi and xii of the Introduction to Part I of "The McDonald Papers.")

#### OAKLEY'S ESCAPE FROM THE REFUGEES AT MAMARONECK.

(This appears on pp. xii and xiii of the Introduction to Part I of "The McDonald Papers.")

#### THE FIRST BLOOD SHED IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

In the latter part of September 1775 some British vessels of war came up the east river and lay off Suttons (now called Delancy's Neck) at Mamaroneck, it was suspected with a view to land and plunder. The militia of the lower part of the County, who were called out to rendezvous at Mamaroneck under the command of Major Gen'l Lewis Morris. While there, information was obtained that William Lounsberry who

had lately left Mamaroneck (where he had resided for a long time) and gone to the enemy, was out with Enlisting Orders, enlisting men out of the militia there assembled, to join the enemy, and was secreted in the rocks in what was called the great lots west of Mamaroneck village. About 20 men were selected to go and capture him and his recruits. One of the party that went from Mamaroneck was a Capt. John Floods who for several years had sailed a market sloop from that place, and resided within half a mile of Lounsberry's residence. When the party came near, Lounsberry fired upon them but did no injury; some of the party returned the fire and wounded one Bloomer Nelson in the knee. Lounsberry ran off, Floods singled him out, pursued, came up with him, and ordered him to surrender, he refused and fought Floods with his gun. Floods run him through with his bayonet, and in his breeches pocket were found his enlisting Orders—

Samuel Haines, Jacob Schureman, Joseph Turner & Bloomer Nelson were taken prisoners. Lounsberry was the first person killed in Westchester County—

#### COL. ODELL'S COMBAT ON THE ICE AT SING SING

The guides & militia being no organized Corps, but volunteers, whenever they went on an expedition put themselves under the command of Capt. Daniel Williams a brave & prudent officer, who after the war was appointed Col. of a regiment of Militia to which I belonged & was Capt. of a company in the same. Williams informed me he could always command the militia horse very well, going down to West Chester & Morrisania (where Delancy's regiment of refugees were stationed) & while there, but in returning, one wanted to stop to see one friend, another, another friend, some would stop to get a drink of cider, others a drink of buttermilk &c that it was very difficult to get them along—

Some time in the winter of 1781 or 82 a party of these guides & militia horse, under the command of Capt. Williams, went down to West Chester & took a number of swords & pistols, and returned as far as Sing Sing, where they insisted

on stopping to get some refreshments & feed their horses. Williams urged them to go on about 3 miles, where some continental troops were and where they would be out of danger, as they would certainly be followed up by the down party of refugees. Notwithstanding Col. Williams' entreaties, they insisted on stopping, & were at the house of one Acker, under the hill near the river, holding a vendue among themselves, selling off the swords & pistols they had taken—

The Hudson river was frozen over except the channel; the enemies horse came suddenly upon them, fired, & frightened some of their horses, that they broke loose and ran off. Many of the men ran off on foot. George McChain a young man about 19 years of age, was overtaken soon after he got on the ice and cut to pieces while on his knees begging for quarter. Williams (who did not get off his horse) after running about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile on the ice, his horse gave out, finding he should be taken, dismounted. Col. Holmes & Capt. Totten came up with him; Williams told them he was their prisoner & gave them his sword, when they left him & pursued after John Odell. The rest of the party were coming on crying out "Kill the d—d rebel &c," when Williams, (having given up his sword, had nothing to defend himself with, & was sure of being cut to pieces) mounted his horse & ran off another quarter as fast as the first; finding it impossible to escape he turned his horse's head toward the channel of the river, determined to run in & drown himself, rather than be cut to pieces; two of the refugee horse (one on each side) came almost near enough to strike him, he gave his horse a sudden check, & being sharp shod he stuck on the ice & his pursuers passed by him, he then turned his horse and got off safe to Tellers point when the firing commenced at the house.

John Odell's horse broke loose & ran off. One of the party named Acker ran off leaving his horse which Odell mounted & ran off before Williams.

Acker's horse that Odell mounted had no shoes on his hind feet. Holmes & Totten left Williams & pursued Odell who was riding with his sword over his head to protect himself. They came up one on each side, Totten nearer than Holmes

when Holmes said to Totten, "Take care that fellow may cut you." Odell said if he had dared checked his horse he could have cut Totten several times, but his horse having no shoes behind he was fearful he might slip. Totten came near enough to strike him with his sword or cut the end of his nose so as to draw blood, when Odell gave a back handed stroke & cut Totten on the shoulder or cheek, when they ceased further pursuit. After they left him, Odell attempted to take up his horse when his feet slipped from under him, & he went several rods on the ice, he hung to him, as the horse ran, sprung on his back & let him run until he reached Teller's point.

I have been informed of this affair by Capt. Williams, Capt. William Dyckman, John Odell & William Vermilyea, all of the party.

#### THE CAPTURE OF DELANCY'S HORSE

Wright Carpenter who resided in North Castle, went down to Col. Delancy's quarters at West Chester with a flag of truce. Col. Delancy was acquainted with him, but asked him jokingly where he lived, he replied, at home; he asked him if he kept any stock, he said yes he had five cows. Delancy said he wondered his boys had not got them before that time. Carpenter said if they did get them he would have his (Delancy's) horse. (Col. Delancy had a very fine English horse.) Not long after this conversation the Refugees stole Carpenter's cows. Carpenter, Thomas Ferris &—— Greene formed a plan to bring off Delancy's horse. They went to West Chester & found that Delancy with his horse had gone to New York. They secreted themselves until his return. When Delancy returned, his horse with another indifferent one & a sprightly mare, (that had been taken from the upper part of the County) were turned into a meadow in part of which there was corn, & two black boys set to watch the horses & keep them from getting into the corn. In the afternoon there came a heavy shower & the boys ran off to the house. They took this opportunity to catch the horses. Carpenter caught

Delancy's horse, Ferris the indifferent one & Greene the mare, & started off at full speed. They passed Williams Bridge where were stationed 25 Refugees; some of whom observed there goes the Col.'s horse. They thinking that Col. Delancy had sent out an express, a party of horse were ordered in pursuit. Ferris finding he could not get off with his horse, left him & ran through the fields towards West Chester & escaped. Delancy's horse sent in pursuit, came within speaking distance of Carpenter & Greene but could not overtake them & they got off safe with their horses.

See *Conn. Gazette*, Oct. 31, 1780.

#### FERRIS'S ADVENTURE AT THROGS NECK

The British, had a number of horses on Throgs Neck at pasture. Jonathan Pawling Horton, Thomas Ferris & Jedediah Owens went down with a view of bringing them off. Owens who had charge of the ropes, lost them, & the Refugees on the neck found them. They then sent scouts in every direction to search the neck, & they searched so thoroughly for them, that they got up into the top of a large tree, to spend the night. They had been there but a short time, when 5 or 6 Refugees came under the same tree, talked about lying down. One of them said there was another tree, a little way off, that would be better to sleep under than that, & they started off. The 3 men then came down from the tree, making as little noise as possible. Horton had taken off his shoes to climb the tree, & set them under a bush, while he was putting them on a man came along & asked who they were, they said of his own party, he went immediately (as they expected) & alarmed the refugees. Horton & Owens made their escape. One of the Refugees pursued Ferris & he ran through a field of his Mothers, where before he left home, large stones had been dug up & left holes in the ground; he crooked about among these holes until the refugees plunged into one, then Ferris made his escape.

Luther Kinnicut who was acting as spy for the Americans was on the neck at that time, & he, with one Robert Simmons



(who had been a refugee Lieut., but had taken disgust & come back to the Americans) endeavoured to secrete these men. They built them up in a very wide stone wall near the water side, where they remained 2 or 3 days. Kinnicut & Simmons layed sedge along the sides of the wall & fed them privately through the holes in the wall.

At length Ferris said there was a place at the upper end of the neck that was fordable at low tide, Kinnicut & Simmons then let them out of the wall & they went as privately as possible there, took off their clothes, bundled them up, put them on their heads, & forded the creek over to Pelham, where they were obliged to conceal themselves 2 or 3 days before they entirely escaped.

#### ATTACK ON COL. GREEN

Col. Green (a stout athletic Southerner) was stationed with his regiment a little below Pinesbridge. Col. Delancy with his regiment of Tory refugees, accompanied by British troops marched up with a view of surprising Green which they did, he not being sufficiently on his guard.

Major Flagg of Green's regiment, had retired; hearing the noise he got up & sitting on the bedside discharged a pistol through the window; those without fired in through the window & killed Major Flagg who fell back on the bed.

Col. Green had 5 or 6 negro waiters. The Enemy (as they were called) attempted to force the door open, Green & his negroes tried to prevent them. The enemy got the door open so that one of their men put his arm through, which Greene seized & broke it across the edge of the door. The enemy at length succeeded in forcing open the door, the negroes surrounded Green to protect him from the blows aimed at him. They were all killed & Col. Green also.

Doct. Eustis a surgeon in the army, (who was afterwards secretary of war & then Governor of Massachusetts) arrived at Green's Quarters a few minutes after the affair happened. I obtained this information from Doct. Eustis himself who informed me that when he arrived there, those negroes lay kicking about the floor like hens with their heads cut off.

## THE ATTACK ON COL. THOMPSON

Col. Thompson was stationed at Young's house, with his regiment, in the winter of 1780 which was near the line of what now are the towns Greenburgh & Mount Pleasant. Col. Thompson had sent one company of his men to the west near Saw Mill river & another to the east where Abraham Davis resided. They found the Enemy were approaching near them with 1500 men to attack Col. Thompson; he sent orders to the companies at Saw Mill river & Davis's to join him as soon as possible.

John Odell was acting as guide to Thompson's regiment, he advised Thompson to retreat; he said his orders were to defend that post. Odell said not against impossibilities. He directed Odell to go & hurry on the men from Davis's. After Odell had gone a little distance, he saw that company ascending a hill about a mile to the north; finding it impossible to get them there, to be of any service, Odell sat on his horse & saw the battle.

Thompson had about 40 men killed, himself & a number of others taken prisoners.

## THE CAPTURE OF MAJOR ANDRE

The legislature passed a law that all stock found driving toward the enemy, below a designated line, should be lawful prize to the captors.

Paulding, Williams & Van Wart were all natives of the town of Greenburg & resided (as also their parents) neighbors to each other, near Saw Mill river. They with 5 or 6 others went near Tarrytown, to capture, whatever might be going to the enemy. Paulding & Van Wart & Williams secreted themselves near the road, while the rest of the party went down near the river to keep a lookout. Paulding & Van Wart were amusing themselves with cards, while Williams kept guard. When Major Andre came along, they sprang into the road & stopped him. What afterwards took place you are already acquainted with.

## LIEUT. MOSIER'S GALLANT STAND AGAINST 45 HORSEMEN

Capt. Richard Sackett raised a company for 6 months. William Mosier was Lieut. in the company. Capt. Sackett with part of the company were breakfasting, at a house, near Thomas' Mills in King street. Lieut. Mosier with 22 men were breakfasting at another house a little distance off.

Col. Holmes with 45 horsemen appeared in sight. Sackett with his men were made prisoners. Mosier with his men fled through cleared fields, pursued by the refugee horse, finding it impossible to escape, Mosier formed his men into a hollow square, facing outward, with orders not to fire until he did, calculating to make the best terms he could, before surrendering. The refugees came on at full speed & shouting, when they pressed on Mosier's men, they kept them back, by pricking the horses noses with their bayonets. Holmes approached near to Mosier (being acquainted with him) & ordered him to surrender & he should have good quarters. Mosier said he would consider on it—knowing (as he told me) that they would frequently promise quarters & when they surrendered cut them to pieces. Holmes parleyed with him some minutes, then drew a pistol & discharged it at Mosier, the ball passing near his temple, Holmes was in the act of drawing another, when Mosier leveled his piece at him & ordered him to return his pistol, or he would blow him off his horse. Holmes returned the pistol into the holster. A Capt. Kipp (who left North Castle & joined the enemy) rode round to Mosier, d——d him & ordered him to surrender & commenced cutting at him with his sword, when Mosier fired at him, the horse rear'd & was shot in the breast, he fell with Kipp's thigh under him. The men fired & the horseman ran off helter skelter through the fields. A negro (belonging to Capt. Sackett) who was with Mosier, sprang from the ranks & thrust his bayonet into Kipp.

By the time the enemy formed again, Mosier's men had reloaded & when the enemy again charged, Mosier's men gave them another shot, when they again fled, they formed, came on the 3rd time & were saluted with another shot, when

they again ran off, & called out for their Infantry to come on. Mosier not knowing but they might have Infantry (as they frequently had) marched off without having a man hurt, & wounding 9 of the enemy. After Mosier went off, the enemy returned, procured a carriage & carried Kipp off who it was said recovered of his wound.

This affair was published in the papers at the time & great credit bestowed on Mosier for his bravery & skill. Shortly after the war Mosier related the whole transaction to me personally.

A Capt. Althouse & his company was sent out by the British & had gone within a short distance of Young's house at Croton. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood collected together & attacked Althouse who defended himself bravely but was overpowered & with his company made prisoners.

Joshua Barnes who had resided at what is now called Harts corner in the town of Greenburg (formerly called Phillips Manor) in the early part of the war, nearly a year before the battle of White Plains went with several others, to the British he then obtained a Capt.'s commission. Althouse not returning as soon as expected, Barnes with his company was sent out to reinforce him. He was met by a Capt. Levensworth of the American army (a young officer, of about 19 years of age) a native of New England with his company, at the point of a hill. Barnes retreated round the hill, to the other side, where he was again met by Levensworth & surrendered with his whole company. Without firing a gun or making any resistance whatever——

#### DEATH OF MR. CRAWFORD

Late in the fall & first part of the winter of 1776 Col. William Duer, Egbert Benson & Jonathan G. Tompkins (all members of the committee of safety) were appointed to superintend the bringing off of all the stock, forage & grain from the lower part of West Chester County to prevent it falling into the hands of the enemy.

Four Continental four horse waggons, with a number of ox teams were procured for that purpose, all the cattle & horse kind of all ages & sizes also forage were brought to my Father's farm. Samuel Crawford (the Father of Elijah Crawford) a stout, spirited man was conductor of these teams. Being down on a Sunday, there was a good deal of skirmishing between Delevan's rangers & the Tory refugees (Capt. Samuel Delevan who commanded a company of rangers was stationed at Judge Ward's house & went down every day to protect these teams). Mr. Crawford called to see his sister & fell in the rear of the teams. The refugees came into the house, & he surrendered himself a prisoner. One of them asked him his name & as soon as he told it run him through with his bayonet. He was taken to King's bridge, thrown into a waggon to be taken to New York & died by the way.

The same night, a company commanded by Capt. Archibald Campbell (a Scotchman) were marched into the yard in front of Judge Ward's house. Campbell immediately advanced on to the piazza floor & uttered the most profane oaths, & ordering the rangers to resign, he approached the step of the door, when a shot from inside, struck him & he fell dead on the piazza floor, when some of his men fired, & killed Lieut. Paddock, who was standing inside, near the door. After entering the lower part of the house & finding no one there, (the rangers, some of them secreting themselves in different parts of the house & some made their escape out the back door) Campbell's men made a precipitate retreat, there being a large company of militia, at a house about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile distant who, on hearing the firing, instead of coming to aid the rangers all ran off.

The Enemy commanded by Lord How advanced within about 4 miles of White Plains on Friday 25th Oct. 1776 & encamped a little north of where John Barker then lived. On Monday 28th they advanced to White Plains, when the battle took place. Genl. How during the time had his headquarters at the house now owned by Mrs. Osbury. They remained here 8 days, then decamped & marched down & captured fort Washington below Kings Bridge.



The British having thrown us out of protection, we had no government but by county committees. In 1775 my Father was chosen a committee man & afterwards chairman of that committee. He was then a member of the provincial congress; then chosen on a committee of safety which committee met at Esopus (now Kingston) & administered the government until the constitution was framed, he was a member at the framing of the first constitution of this state. After the constitution was framed he was appointed one of the Judges, which office he held until appointed first judge.

Of the offices he held & services he rendered the remainder of his life you are already informed.

In regard to myself I was born at Scarsdale Dec. 23rd 1759. In 1775 I was enrolled in the Militia at the age of 16 & performed duty until the battle at White Plains. I belonged to Col. Thomas' regiment. In the fall of the same year the militia were ordered out & assembled at Mamaroneck, some British Vessels of war lying off that place, it was supposed intending to land & plunder; they remained there about a week, then went off & we were discharged. Shortly after a serjeants guard was ordered to Jay's place on Rye Neck, to keep guard & protect the stock on the neck from being taken off. I was one of that guard & remained there eight days.

In the summer of 1780 some British vessels of War sailed up the Hudson & anchored off Fishkill, all the militia of Dutches County were ordered to march to Fishkill with 7 days provision. I belonged to a company commanded by Capt. Pearce. We marched late in the afternoon as far as Col. Luddington's on the mountain west of Patterson, where we staid during the night (We there met Genl. Arnold & his wife he being on his way to take command at West Point) the next day we marched to Fishkill & remained there that night, the next day the British shipping having gone down the river, we were drawn up in a hollow square, received the thanks of Govr. George Clinton for our prompt attention & were dismissed.

## CHAPTER VI

### MOSIER'S FIGHT WITH THE REFUGEES ON DECEMBER 2ND, 1781

BY OTTO HUFELAND

A PAPER READ NEAR THE SCENE OF THE SKIRMISH AT RYE, ON THE  
OCCASION OF A PILGRIMAGE OF THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON MAY 28TH, 1927

A FEW EXPLANATORY NOTES HAVE BEEN ADDED

As much of the data on which this paper is based came from the interviews recorded in the McDonald manuscripts, its inclusion in their papers seems justified.

The fight took place on the former Brundage Farm<sup>1</sup> on the south side of Harrison Avenue just east of Blind Brook. As the present occupants of the land declined to permit access to the ground, the paper was read from a spot overlooking the battlefield on the opposite side of the Avenue. This accounts for some of the references to locations made in it.

On the hill opposite, one of the most interesting skirmishes of the Revolution took place. It had a national, even a world-wide interest, but to us in Westchester County it has the additional importance of showing that our farmers, in the

<sup>1</sup> Silas Brundage, son of the then owner, says he was "born and brought up on the farm where the fight occurred" and describes the location as "Immediately west of the field of action you descend a hill." As this is the only "hill" on the farm and is just south of Harrison Avenue along which the Refugees rode, this description fixes the location quite definitely. Interview with McDonald, October 30th 1848.

five years of war which preceded this affair, had learned to fight, so that they became more than a match, even for the British horsemen, from whom they would have fled in panic when that war began.

On this occasion the British came on one of the many similar raids that so nearly depopulated our county, but the fight that resulted was of an unusual kind and it had an unexpected ending for the band of cowboys, who rode all the night only to return crestfallen and empty handed to their camp twenty miles below, in the morning.

But to understand the fight some explanation is necessary. First let us get the lay of the land on which the parties met and then examine the conditions under which the pursuit and final fight took place. To the east, where the road here before us crossed the one that goes to Purchase, were "Merritts Corners" around which was gathered a small settlement of farm houses. The fine road over which we came was then a farm lane, none too straight, that ran east from "The Corners," passing Colonel Thomas' house<sup>1</sup> about half a mile to the right of us, then crossed Blind Brook where his mill stood a few hundred feet from here—and continued on to King Street, then and now an important highway. Rail fences lined both sides of the lane to keep in the cattle, while the stones, afterward gathered into fences, lay thickly scattered over half-tilled corn and grazing fields. Farms and farming conditions were primitive then; the daily life of the people who occupied the farms was simple and they knew but few social distinctions, although negro slavery existed. The slaves they owned were more like free family servants and took part in most of the affairs and duties of their masters,—so that when fighting

<sup>1</sup> Erskine, who was "Geographer" to Washington's army, in a map dated 1778-9, shows three Thomas' Houses in this vicinity. That of Judge John Thomas, who was taken prisoner in March 1777 and died and was buried in New York a few months later, on King Street a mile or so north of the present Harrison Avenue; that of Colonel Thomas Thomas of the 2nd Westchester Militia on Harrison Avenue with his mill close by at Blind Brook and another of the "Widow Thomas" about a quarter of a mile north of the latter in the fields, probably near the still existing Thomas Cemetery.

began, many of them enlisted in the army and did good service for the cause.

Although Yorktown had surrendered six weeks before and the war was generally believed to be at an end, Washington took no risks and to guard against a rapid movement of Sir Henry Clinton, who was in New York, to gain control of the Hudson, he kept most of the regular Continental soldiers then in the North on duty along the river, while the territory between it and Long Island Sound was guarded by small bodies of militia, too far apart to offer each other assistance in time of need.

Such an outpost had been established at Merritts Corners under Captain Richard Sackett of Colonel Thomas' regiment, with William Mosier, a stone mason by trade as his lieutenant and a company of about thirty men,<sup>1</sup> consisting of two former British sergeants who had joined the patriot side, four colored men—at least two of whom were slaves—two Indians from Long Island and a mixed collection of white men, mainly farmers and laborers from other parts of the county, who together were supposed to protect a rather indefinite territory in this vicinity.

<sup>1</sup> In interviews with McDonald on October 30, 1845, October 12, 1846 and October 19, 1847, John Patterson, an active participant in the fight gave the following partial list of the men of Sackett's command from recollection:

Captain Richard Sackett, taken prisoner	
Lieutenant William Mosier	
Sergeant James Croft	
David Slater	} former British sergeants
David Jones	
Henry Christian	
Godfrey Voight	
John Patterson	} colored
Prince Sackett	
Peter Sokaday	} Indians from Long Island
Mayhew	
James Nearing	
William Campbell	
James Tuttle	
Abel or Abraham Williams	
James Sackett, brother of Captain, taken prisoner	

It was early on Sunday morning, December 2nd, 1781, while Sackett was being shaved by a lad from the neighborhood, that a body of Refugees appeared so suddenly that the surprised captain did not have time to wipe the lather from his face, before they took him and his brother James prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Mosier with most of the company was encamped in a field south of the lane, a little more to the east and seeing the British coming ran with his men through the fields, the mounted Refugees on his left being compelled to remain in the lane by the high rail fences. The parties were about a quarter of a mile apart and within sight of each other most of the time. The pursuit continued in this way until the enemy succeeded in knocking down some of the fence rails, which permitted them to enter the fields. By this time Mosier, with twenty-six of his men, had reached the top of the hill here before us, where, ordering them to "fix bayonets," he formed them into a solid square or circle, with himself in the centre. Together with the two sergeants he at the same

---

Sylvanus Ferris

Asa Jones

Daniel Loder

Shubal Cunningham

Two colored men, names not remembered

Lieutenant Mosier, like the men, carried a musket and bayonet. The following death notice appeared in the "Westchester Herald" of December 17th, 1850.

"Died in Peekskill, October 2nd last, John Peterson (colored), Revolutionary Pensioner, aged 103 years." This was the "Patterson" of our story. According to this he was 34 years old at the time of the Rye skirmish. His name is spelled in various ways in different accounts. Probably because he could not write.

The company was raised shortly before for six months service. Only a few of these names appear on the roster of Colonel Thomas' regiment, published by the State of New York, but many of them including the officers had served at various times in other regiments raised in Westchester and the adjacent counties.

<sup>1</sup> This happened in Josiah Fowler's tavern on Purchase Street near the cross-roads.

Interview with John Carpenter, son of the quartermaster of Thomas' regiment, October 23, 1844.



time explained to them that their only chance of safety lay in keeping close together, strictly obeying orders and above all impressed on them not to fire their guns until told to. Here, herded together, with loaded guns and lowered bayonets, they awaited the British charge.

The attacking column consisted of about forty-five mounted Refugees, nearly every one of them a native of Westchester County and personally known to many of their opponents. They were a motley collection of Tories, held together by hope of plunder, rather than any affection for the British, who neither acknowledged them as part of their regular army, nor paid or provisioned them. Their existence depended entirely upon marauding and the plunder they took furnished them with food, clothing and horses. They had ridden up from their camp in what is now known as Mott Haven and were part of a body of irregulars who were justly feared, because they knew every lane and by-way and were in constant communication with local Tory friends who kept them informed of every movement of the Americans. The officers accompanying this detachment were Colonel James Holmes<sup>1</sup> of Bedford, who at the beginning of the Revolution, commanded an American regiment and Captain Samuel Kipp who came from North Castle. All of the troop were armed with the long heavy, sharpened cavalry sabres of the period, while the officers and probably many of the rank and file carried heavy but not very effective pistols.

As the British dashed up to the compact body of Americans

<sup>1</sup> James Holmes of Bedford was colonel of the 4th New York Regiment of Continental troops early in the war. He resigned from the American army in December 1775. His attachment to the American cause was never considered sincere and he later accepted a commission in the notorious Refugee Corps.

For reasons not clear he placed himself in the power of Governor George Clinton in 1778 and was sent to prison from which he escaped only to be recaptured and escape again.

Judging from interviews with some of his townspeople of Bedford, his reputation during and after the war was none of the best. In fact he is accused by some of his neighbors of having served as a volunteer in the raid in which Bedford Village was partly burned in 1779.

on this hill, the latter lunged at them with their bayonets, pricking the horses, which reared and threw the attacking party into some confusion, so that it retreated out of reach. This first success encouraged the Americans. When a second attempt was made, the enemy found a still firmer line and were compelled to drop back even quicker than before; one of their number, Strang by name, fired his pistol in anger, for which he was instantly shot dead by a sharp order from Mosier.

This quick retribution had its effect on both sides; it steadied the Americans and gave notice to the Refugees that they had a serious fight on their hands. After consultation among themselves, they tried argument and a parley began, in which the words exchanged were almost as hard as bullets if contemporary accounts are to be believed. Holmes and Kipp promised quarter to the Americans if they surrendered, but the answer returned was probably irritating, for Holmes drew his pistol and pointed it at Mosier, who at once gave a command that meant certain death to the Colonel and the pistol was dropped, while Kipp satisfied his anger and disappointment by abusing some of the privates whom he recognized, particularly a colored man, who shortly before, had been a prisoner under him at Morrisania. When he called him a "black rascal," John Patterson rushed out from his place in the square and thrust his bayonet into the captain's hip, dodging his furious sword cut and getting back to his place in safety, only to be sharply reprimanded by his own officer.—It was said that the captain's seat in the saddle was painful for some time.

Finding argument unprofitable, the British made two or three more efforts to break up the small but immovable body opposed to them, but found it more and more difficult to approach. After spending more than an hour in a fruitless endeavor to make an impression on the much smaller body of Americans they turned about and sullenly rode away.

The accounts brought down to us of the ending of this affair differ. Some claim that after a number of assaults by the enemy, the Americans fired a volley that threw the British into confusion, during which the former escaped.

None of the local accounts however mention any such firing and simply say that the British withdrew. A volley from twenty six guns at short range would certainly have killed and wounded many of the attacking party, but no such record appears. These accounts say that the body of Strang was taken to one of the nearby farm houses<sup>1</sup> and was sent for by the British under a flag of truce the next day. It is the only casualty mentioned by them. All sides agree that the Americans did not lose a man.

It may not be clear to you why two fully armed bodies of soldiers should parley instead of fight. But a study of conditions makes it plain that both sides would have suffered severely if the arbitrament of arms had been finally resorted to.

Even if we admit that both parties were equally well armed—and it is more than doubtful that this was true of the Americans—a fight would have resulted in much bloodshed on both sides and probably the annihilation of the American force in the end. The latter were armed with flint lock guns from which they could fire not more than one shot without reloading. To reload it was necessary to open the pan under the flint, pour in some powder and then close it, pour a full charge into the muzzle of the gun, place a wad and a ball over it and ram the latter home with a ramrod. Taken together, this was an almost impossible proceeding while fleeing through the fields from a mounted enemy. And it was particularly difficult when a bayonet encumbered the muzzle of the gun. If the Americans had fired their one shot from open ranks upon the first charge of the cavalry, it would have emptied a few saddles, but the rest would have ridden down the fleeing infantry and dispatched them separately with their sabres without quarter, just as they did in the battle with the Stockbridge Indians on Woodlawn Heights three years before,

<sup>1</sup> Sylvanus Strang's body was placed across a horse by the Refugees and taken to Josiah Fowlers, kept there and a flag of truce sent up for his body.

Interview with Jeremiah Anderson of the Anderson House, used as General Sterling's headquarters. December 1st, 1848.

where thirty-seven Indians were slaughtered and only one of Tarleton's troops was wounded.

If however, the British had tried to ride down Mosier's party when in solid formation, some of them and many of their horses would have been made "*hors du combat*" by the bayonets and the separated remainder would have faced twenty or more determined men with loaded guns and the same ready bayonets in their hands.

William Mosier had the instinct of a true soldier with a soldier's daring and a brave man's courage; his quick mind saw this difference and he promptly made use of the only possible means to save his command from a catastrophe.

While the use of a compact formation of infantry with bayonets, in a defense against an attack by cavalry, became common in later wars, it was new then. At a time when the whole world was at war and studying methods of warfare and both the infantry and cavalry arms had strong partizans defending their respective merits, the news of this skirmish was received with astonishment in Europe. Washington often referred to it and expressed his admiration for the skill and courage of the American officer who commanded here.

In a strictly technical, military sense, this skirmish was the most important fight of the whole war.

It also illustrated an American trait—a quick perception of a difficulty and a prompt and practical remedy—and both were put to good use in a just cause on the hill opposite.

CHAPTER VII  
ANDREW CORSA—OBITUARY<sup>1</sup>  
THE LAST OF THE WESTCHESTER GUIDES  
BY JOHN M. MACDONALD

On the evening of Sunday the 21st of November at his residence in Fordham, Andrew Corsa<sup>2</sup> departed this life at the age of nearly ninety-one. He was born on the 24th day of January, 1762, where the Roman Catholic College of St. John now stands, on the farm occupied by his paternal ancestor, a native of Germany, who settled on the Manor of Fordham about the year 1690. Both his father and grandfather were natives of the same spot with himself. The latter was born in 1692, about the time of Governor Fletcher's arrival in the colony, after whom he was named Benjamin Fletcher. When the revolutionary troubles commenced, Captain Isaac Corsa,<sup>3</sup> the father of the subject of this notice, held a commission under the crown, and like most persons

<sup>1</sup> This obituary was published in Bolton's *History of the County of Westchester*, 1881, Vol. II. pp. 532-4 with the following preliminary statement:

"Andrew Corsa, who was born at Rose Hill in 1762, afterwards removed to a farm nearly opposite where he died in 1852. The following obituary notice occurs in the *Westchester Herald* for that year."

In the Van Tassel papers in the Hufeland Westchesteriana is a note that the Andrew Corsa obituary was published in the *Westchester Herald* on January 11, 1853.

<sup>2</sup> The Corsa genealogy has been exhaustively traced by Stanley J. Corsa of Brooklyn, N. Y. It is published in Vol. V. of French's *History of Westchester County*, Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., New York and Chicago, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Among the MSS. in the Secry's Dept. are the original Muster Rolls of the companies which served in the campaign of 1755 against the French; among others is Capt. Isaac Corsa's Comp., Westchester 95 rank.—Doc. Hist. of N. Y. vol. ii, 696.



similarly situated, espoused the royal side throughout the great controversy. But parental authority was not sufficient to keep the young Andrew long within the limits of the ancient allegiance; and about the middle of the war, his strong inclinations in favor of American independence overcame every other consideration, and he commenced an independent career by rendering important services to the Guides and scouting parties that approached the British lines, whether for attack or observation. Minutely acquainted with all the passes about Kingsbridge, Fordham and Morrisania—and withal of a disposition sprightly, intelligent and communicative—his services were anxiously sought for; when in the summer of 1781, after the allied forces had been encamped upon the heights of Greenburgh about two weeks, Washington and Rochambeau made ready for a formidable movement with a select portion of their army, towards the lines of the enemy. Preparatory to this operation, Count Mathieu Dumas, the two brothers Berthier, and several other young officers belonging to the French staff, who had, for some days, been zealously engaged in exploring the ground and roads and in sketching maps of the country between the allied camp and Kings Bridge, were ordered by the French commander to set out before daylight, and to push their examinations till they came within sight of the enemy's most advanced redoubts, at the northern extremity of New York island. To protect these youthful adventurers, a strong detachment of the lancers of Lauzun was sent along under Lieutenant Kilmaine, a young Irishman in the French service, who some years afterwards became a General of Division and enjoyed the reputation of being one of the best cavalry officers in Europe. The command of the whole party was bestowed upon Dumas, while the celebrated Cornelius Oakley of Whiteplains was selected to act as principal Guide accompanied by his cousin James Oakley and young Corsa. Below Mile-square the reconnoitering party formed a junction with a select body of American light infantry, who on the same morning had gone down to explore the ground on the right; and the two allied detachments then attacked and dispersed

a strong patrol of Delancey's Refugees, and soon afterwards assaulted and drove across Kings Bridge the Chasseurs that occupied the Hessian out posts:—pursuing the fugitives till they came within musket shot of Prince Charles' redoubt. This reconnoissance established in favor of Kilmaine and of the elder Berthier,—the latter of whom was afterwards a Marshal of France under Napoleon, and Prince of Wagram and Neufchatel,—reputations for partisan skill and intrepidity that led to their subsequent preferment.

A few days later occurred the grand reconnoissance, which was made on the 22d and 23d of July by the American and French commanders and engineers supported by 5000 troops of the two nations, for the purpose of examining with precision the British posts on New York Island between Hudson River and the Sound,—and of cutting off, if possible, such of the enemy's corps as might be found upon the main. Young Andrew Corsa's intelligence and exact knowledge of the country about the British lines were such that his services were again earnestly sought for upon this occasion; and during both these days he was constantly on horseback, riding and conversing with Washington, Rochambeau, Lauzun, and the other Generals of the combined army, while they passed through the fields of Morrisania, Fordham and Yonkers, halting from time to time as they moved along for the purpose of enabling the commanders and engineers to examine the grounds along Harlem river and Spuytenduyvil creek. He used to relate that when the allies, marching from the east near the Bronx and passing over the high grounds around Morrisania House came in sight of the enemy, the fire which the British artillery opened upon them from the fortifications at Randall's Island and Snake-hill—from the batteries at Harlem and from the ships of war at anchor in the river, was terrible and incessant; and obeying the instinct of self-preservation, which became suddenly predominant—he urged his horse forward at full speed and rode for safety behind the old Morrisania mill. Here he pulled up, and looking back, saw Washington, Rochambeau, and other officers riding along calmly under the fire as though nothing unusual had

occurred. His self-possession now returned; and, ashamed at having given way to an impulse of fear, he at once pricked back with all the rapidity to which he could urge his horse, and resumed his place in the order of march; while the commanding officers, with good natured peals of laughter, welcomed him back and commended his courage.

Mr. Corsa knew personally every individual of that celebrated band of volunteers called the "Westchester Guides," of whom he himself was the last and youngest; and he was among the most confidential friends of the heroic Abraham Dyckman, who fell prematurely at the close of the revolutionary contest. Possessed of a memory unusually retentive, and residing constantly upon the borders of the "neutral ground," he was acquainted with all the distinguished partisans both from above and below, and with nearly all the military operations whether great or small that occurred along this portion of the British lines; and which, until within the last few days of his life, he continued to describe in minute detail.

Upon the conclusion of the revolutionary war, his father's lands, by a compulsory sale passed out of the family; and although without any means at the time, he did not hesitate to purchase, with money borrowed upon mortgage, a contiguous farm—which industry and good management enabled him, not many years after, to disencumber. Much engaged in the cultivation of fruit for the market, he was particularly successful with the apple and pear; discovering and bringing into use a variety of the latter which bears his name, being known distinctively as the *Corsian Vergaloo*.

For many years he was a member of the Reformed Dutch Church at Fordham. His death was preceded by none of the diseases to which humanity is heir, and he ceased to exist only because he was worn out by toil and time. The machine which had been set in motion by its divine constructor and which had gone on for more than four score years and ten, "at last stood still," and the weary occupant sought a better habitation. His memory continued unimpaired until nearly the close of his existence. Among his survivors are eight

children, and numerous other descendants. Simple and patriarchal in his manners, a zealous, generous, and useful friend, neighbor and citizen;—estimable and upright in all the relations of life—Andrew Corsa deserves to be held in honorable remembrance.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RESOLUTIONS SPREAD UPON THE MINUTES OF THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT A MEETING HELD DECEMBER 1, 1863

Mr. George H. Moore announced the death of Mr. John M. Macdonald, a Resident Member of the Society,<sup>1</sup> with the following remarks:—

The father and mother of Mr. John MacLean Macdonald were of Scottish birth and parentage, and both emigrated to America in early childhood. They both descended from ancestors of the same name, *Macdonald*, although the two families were not known to be akin. The father Dr. Archibald Macdonald, belonged to the Macdonalds of Glengarry in the Highlands of Scotland, while the mother's family came from the islands north of Scotland. It is probable that the two families were originally of the same stock, although there has been some dispute as to their common origin. The Macdonalds' of Glengarry were zealous adherents of the Stuarts, and took an active part in the rebellion of 1745. The father of Dr. Archibald Macdonald and the grandfather of our late friend, was killed at the battle of Culloden. His children emigrated to Canada soon afterwards. His eldest son and representative of the family was Ronald Macdonald, who afterwards became Colonel of the forty-second regiment in the British Army. He was at one time in command of one of the military posts in Canada, and was familiarly called Gov-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Macdonald was elected a member of the New York Historical Society, January 2, 1844.



error. Dr. Archibald Macdonald was educated to the medical profession, and in the earlier part of his career held a commission as Surgeon in the British Army.<sup>1</sup> He afterwards became a citizen of the United States, married his wife in Dutchess County, New York, and settled in White Plains, Westchester County, where he resided as a practitioner of medicine until the time of his death in 1813. He had five sons, of whom John MacLean Macdonald was the eldest. He was born December 27th 1790—graduated at Columbia College in 1810—studied law in the office of Mr. Peter J. Munro of New York City, then one of the most distinguished of the profession. He continued with him during the whole of his clerkship, and was admitted to the bar as an Attorney of the Supreme Court in 1813.

In 1821, he became a Counsellor in the Court of Chancery, and in May, 1823, was appointed one of the Masters in Chancery. Reappointed in April 1826, and in April 1830, he continued to hold the office until September 1832, when he resigned it and accepted that of Justice of the Police Court, as the successor of Josiah Hedden, who was killed by being thrown from his carriage in the previous month 16th August, 1832. He continued to hold this office until October 1, 1834, when he resigned (it is stated) in consequence of ill health.

In the autumn of 1835, at the age of 45, Judge Macdonald was prostrated by a severe paralytic attack from the effects of which he never recovered.

But he failed not, nor faltered in spirit. His work, after such a stroke of disease as would have discouraged and destroyed most men, has been such as would do honor to one who should accomplish it with all the advantages of health and physical ability.

He devoted his attention chiefly to our Revolutionary History, and especially that of his native County of Westchester, whose hills and vallies and roads and byways he has made familiar by his writings in all the beauty, sympathy and pride of local association.

Much of what he has written has been presented from time

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Macdonald was surgeon in the 84th Royal Highland Regiment.

to time to the consideration of this Society, of which he was an honored member:—

The following is a list of this series of papers:

1. "The Life and Character of the Marquis de la Rouërie (Col. Armand) including an account of his services during the American Revolutionary War." Read May 6th, 1851.

2. "On the Lives, Exploits and Characters of Cornelius Oakley, John Odell, and Abraham Dyckman, the three principal American Guides for the Neutral Ground during the Revolutionary War"—Read May 4th 1852.

This paper, as subsequently revised was read a second time at a meeting of November 3rd, 1863, just before the death of the writer.

3. "Neutral Ground of Westchester, containing a particular account of the surprize and capture, on the 29th of April, 1780, of Col. De Lancey's Post at Archer's House in Fordham." Read May 2d, 1854.

4. "Battle of White Plains."—Read October 7, 1856.

5. "The British Expedition to Danbury in 1777."—Read October 5th, 1858.

6. "The Surprize and Capture of Poundridge, Westchester County on the 2nd of July 1779, by Lieut. Col. Tarleton: with a Biographical Sketch of that officer."—Read October 1, 1861.

7. "Col. DeLancey's Final Departure from Westchester." Read June 17, 1862.

8. "The Operations and Skirmishes of the British and American Armies in the County of Westchester, during the Autumn of '76—before the Battle of White Plains."—Read October 7th 1862.

It has been my good fortune to read to the Society this series of papers of which it is not too much to say that none have

ever been received with more interest or satisfaction. It is certainly to be hoped that they will hereafter be preserved in a permanent form—at once a valuable contribution to the historical literature of the State, and an enduring memorial of his peculiar services to the cause of history and interest in the objects of this Society.

And this brings vividly to me the recollections of my own personal intercourse with Judge Macdonald. I recall him as I first saw him, slowly and with difficulty ascending to the old rooms in the University, in which for so many years we sojourned “as for a season”—and with the assistance of his servant reaching his accustomed place at the old green table at the head of the room.

That old green table! Who shall write hereafter the record of those days in the Society, and the distinguished men who met around it, and by their personal voice and presence and active co-operation honored and cheered the Society in their honorable work—Gallatin and Adams, and Clay and Webster—and our late honored and lamented President.<sup>1</sup> Truly, “There were giants in those days.”

At that old table Judge Macdonald spent patient hours of quiet study over the files of old newspapers and other volumes illustrating the subjects of his investigation—recording slowly and with difficulty with his left hand the points of importance and various illustrations to be woven into the web of his future work. It was my custom to leave him during the intermediate hours in which the library was closed, and my own duties required attention elsewhere, to pursue these assiduous and earnest researches.

Most of you can doubtless recall his appearance—venerable and infirm, touching in its very infirmity, as he seemed when last with us in 1858, at the reading of his charming paper on the Danbury Expedition.

But gradually he was deprived even of the ability to be with us in person, and the encroachments of disease compelled him

<sup>1</sup> This probably refers to Luther Bradish, LL.D., for many years President of the New York Historical Society, who died August 30, 1863.

—EDITOR.

to abandon the use of the pen and to dictate to an amanuensis the results of his long study and reflection.

And so patiently he waited for the end of his long imprisonment. He died on the morning of Sunday, the eighth of November, 1863, not having quite completed his seventy-third year.

I have often thought, as I saw him thus confined by the walls and fetters of physical infirmity, still cheerful and genial and happy in intellectual exercises and resources—of those lines of the old poet,

“My mind to me a kingdom is;  
Such perfect joy therein I find.”

and these others which complete a parallel—

“Stonewalls do not a prison make  
Nor iron bars a cage  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
Such for a hermitage  
If I have freedom in my thought  
And in my soul are free  
Angels alone that soar above  
Enjoy such libertie.”

Mr. Moore then submitted the following resolutions which were adopted unanimously, after some remarks by Rev. Dr. Osgood.

*Resolved*, That the New York Historical Society has heard with profound sympathy the announcement of the death of its late associate member JOHN M. MACDONALD—and records with pride and satisfaction its grateful acknowledgment of his many services, his continued interest in its objects and prosperity and especially for the series of able, interesting and instructive papers communicated from time to time at its meetings.

*Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered on the minutes, and communicated to the relatives of the deceased.

The Society then adjourned.

ANDREW WARNER,  
*Recording Secretary.*



## CHAPTER IX

### JOHN MACLEAN MACDONALD

1790-1863

A facsimile of a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature reads "John M. Macdonald" in a cursive script. The first letter "J" is large and loops around the first part of the name. The signature is underlined with a single, slightly wavy line.

(FACSIMILE SIGNATURE)\*

John MacLean Macdonald was the eldest son of Dr. Archibald Macdonald and Flora MacLean, his wife, and was born Dec. 27, 1790, at Franklin, Dutchess County, N. Y. (now Patterson, Putnam County, N. Y.).

In an address before the Westchester County Medical Society, at its session held in White Plains, June 1, 1858,<sup>2</sup> entitled "Biographical Sketches of the Deceased Physicians of Westchester County, N. Y.," George J. Fisher, M.D., gave the following biography of Dr. Archibald Macdonald:

"Dr. Archibald Macdonald of White Plains, will first claim our attention, as being one of the most distinguished of the earlier physicians of our county, of whom we have been able to obtain any satisfactory account; but more especially from the fact of his having been prominent among the founders of this Medical Society, now in the sixty-first year of its age.

"In the first volume of the *Medical Repository*, which was the first medical journal ever published in America, under date of June 25, 1797, may be found the following notice:

"'On the 8th of May, at the White Plains, there was a

\* This facsimile signature is from the will of John M. Macdonald.

<sup>2</sup> This was published in pamphlet form in 1861 and from a copy of it this quotation has been made.

meeting of respectable physicians of the county of Westchester, who formed themselves into a society, to be known and called by the name and style of "The Medical Society of the County of Westchester." Dr. Archibald Macdonald was elected President, and Dr. Matson Smith, of New Rochelle, Secretary. The principal views of their formation appear to be a harmonious establishment of a regular practice of physic throughout the county, and an immediate compliance of the law of the Legislature of the State, made at the last session.'

"Dr. Archibald Macdonald (not McDonald) was a native of Inverness, in Scotland, and belonged to what was called the Glengarry branch of the Macdonalds. The Glengarries write their name Macdonnell, but the Dr. in the latter part of his life, adopted the orthography generally used by the other Macdonald families.

"When the Stuarts, in 1745, made their last attempt to recover the crown, the doctor's father joined Charles Edward, the pretender, with enthusiasm, and during that or the following year perished in battle, when his son Archibald was but a few weeks old; so the parent and his youngest child never saw each other.

"Archibald came to this country at the age of twelve years, being about the year 1757. He lived for a while in Canada, and received his medical education in Philadelphia, to which place he was sent by his brother, an officer in the British Service. For a number of years he practiced his profession in North Carolina; he also served several years as a surgeon in the British army.

"In the year 1787, he married in Dutchess County, in this State, and continued to reside there for several years, and finally, in the year 1795, settled at White Plains, where he practiced his profession down to the time of his death, which occurred on the 21st day of December, 1813, being at the time of his decease, sixty-eight years of age. The place of his sepulchre is designated by a tombstone in the cemetery of the Presbyterian Church in that village.

"From a genealogical manuscript in the handwriting of his brother, it appears that he was a descendant of Robert de

Bruce; one of his ancestors having married a daughter of that monarch. Personally very popular, his practice was large and his professional reputation so high that he was often called long distances for consultations."<sup>1</sup>

In the History of White Plains,<sup>2</sup> Josiah S. Mitchell says: "In 1799 Dr. Archibald McDonald moved into the town, having purchased the property on the corner of Broadway and Spring St." This reference is interesting, for while the date is probably wrong, it indicates the location of the White Plains home where John M. Macdonald grew to manhood.

Dr. Archibald Macdonald had six (6) sons. John, the eldest, born Dec. 27, 1790; Alexander, born 1791 and died at Batavia, in the Island of Java, Aug. 15, 1823; Allan born Nov. 21, 1794, and died Jan. 8, 1862; Archibald born March 10, 1799, died Sept. 8, 1823; Donald born March 10, 1799, died Nov. 25, 1851; James born July 18, 1803, and died May 5, 1849. The latter was the only one of the sons who married and left issue.

On the tombstone of the mother are simply the words—"Flora Macdonald—died April 2, 1835 in the 70th year of her age." So far as is known this Macdonald family had no connection with that of Flora Macdonald, the celebrated Jacobite heroine who saved "Bonnie Prince Charlie" after the disaster at Culloden in 1746. And yet to a man of the sensitive type of John Macdonald his mother's name must have constantly reminded him of the romances of the Highlands of Scotland and influenced him in preserving the tales of the Hills of Westchester and the Highlands of the Hudson.

It was in 1814 that Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* was published and Fergus MacIvor in that novel depicts another Macdonald of Glengarry, the last genuine specimen of a Highland chieftain. As the stories of Lauzun, Armand, Tarleton, Delancey, Odell, Oakley, Dyckman, Corsa, and others are read it is helpful to recall the antecedents of the author and the environment in which he developed.

<sup>1</sup> See also Scharf's History of Westchester County, Philadelphia, 1886. Vol. 1, pp. 573 and 574 for a less circumstantial biography by Dr. Fisher.

<sup>2</sup> Scharf, Vol. 1, p. 728.

John M. Macdonald was educated as a lawyer and practised his profession for several years. He suffered a stroke of paralysis which left him a physical wreck, but with unimpaired intellect. His illness compelled him to abandon his professional career, and thereafter, during his intervals between suffering, he spent the balance of his life in literary studies and was particularly devoted to all incidents in connection with Revolutionary activities in Westchester County.

As for about twenty-eight years he was an infirm paralytic, requiring the services of an attendant much of the time, his fortunes became in some degree those of the other members of his family and particularly of his brothers Allan and James. Allan was prominent in Westchester County, having been Sheriff from 1826-1829, a state Senator from 1832-1835, and was Adjutant-General under Governor Marcy,<sup>1</sup> his term of office expiring January 1, 1837. He was one of the founders of *The Westchester Spy* in 1830, the first newspaper published in White Plains; also active in establishing Grace (Protestant Episcopal) Church and one of its first Wardens. He was usually referred to as "The General."

James became a famous Doctor and after his death in 1849, a Eulogy in his memory was delivered before the New York Medical and Surgical Society by John A. Swett, M.D. This was published in pamphlet form in the same year, and from a copy of it the following quotations have been made.

"His education was carefully superintended by an excellent and devoted mother. In 1821 he commenced the study of his profession in his native village, but afterwards entered the office of the late Dr. Hosack, of this city (New York). He received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York in the year 1825.

"He then became Resident Physician of Bloomingdale Asylum, and devoted his time to the study of mental diseases. In 1831 the Governors of the Hospital sent him abroad to visit the asylums for the insane in Europe. He remained abroad

<sup>1</sup> William Larned Marcy was Governor of the State of New York, 1833-1839.

for about sixteen (16) months; when he returned he assumed the whole medical responsibility connected with the management of Bloomingdale Asylum.

"In 1837 he resigned and commenced the general practice of his profession in New York. In May of the following year (1838) he was married to Miss Eliza H. Miller, daughter of Sylvanus Miller, Esq. The same year he was elected one of the attending physicians of the New York Hospital.

"A long cherished design of establishing, in connection with his brother, Mr. Allan Macdonald, a private institution for the insane, was carried into execution after an interval of about three (3) years. For this purpose two houses, agreeably situated on Murray Hill, in the suburbs of the city were selected, but the rapid spread of our population soon rendered this situation no longer available. The elegant and spacious mansion of the late Chancellor Sandford, at Flushing, was purchased, and in May, 1846, the Institution was permanently located in this new situation."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. James Macdonald died May 5, 1849. To his widow was left the care of the family of small children and the devoted mother ably discharged her obligations; she was a zealous church-worker as the records of her parish bear witness and she carried on the farm and capably directed its management. It was in her household that John M. Macdonald lived for many years and she not only ministered unto his frail physique but she found time to arrange and transcribe many of his crude notes and papers. It is proper that the people of Westchester County should know this record and pay proper tribute to the memory of this gifted and noble woman.

In September, 1844, John M. Macdonald began the excursions into Westchester County that finally resulted in 407 recorded interviews with 241 different persons. The last excursion was in 1851, beginning Oct. 16 and ending Oct. 20. The companion and guide was Andrew Corsa. As one visualizes this aged man, accompanied by an invalid of frail physique and his servant, going about among the hills of

<sup>1</sup> Sanford Hall remained in possession of the Macdonald family until 1925.



Westchester County, telling the story of the Revolution and the "Neutral Ground" and the Refugees it is little wonder that so many were willing to entertain them and tell them of what they had seen and heard.

These interviews constitute a remarkable record. As one reads them the enthusiasm of the student and interviewer is commingled with the pride of the witness in having personally been a part of the tale related. No one can read the interviews without due recognition of some unusual circumstances in their collection. A guide who had served under Washington and Rochambeau was talking with them; a legally trained mind was asking questions in turn. Having aroused interest and enthusiasm could any more effective means of collecting and preserving the stories be conceived?

And then in 1852 Andrew Corsa died. The obituary was written from the heart. The manuscript shows that its preparation was labored. It is lined and interlined. A student of John Macdonald's papers easily selects "The Westchester Guides" as his masterpiece. As the American Army needed guides through the uncharted by-ways of Westchester County so the author needed a guide through the difficult and painful course of his life. He knew what it was to be dependent upon the knowledge and skill of others; he manfully persisted in spite of his handicap and victory was finally his just as surely as it came to the Patriots after years of painful suffering. The trials of the Neutral Ground were indelibly stamped upon the very soul of John Macdonald as his own life was a counterpart in suffering, in defeat, in unyielding struggles and finally in victory over all obstacles. He died in Flushing, Nov. 8, 1863. As he said "Andrew Corsa deserves to be held in honorable remembrance" let us here record in similar phrase that John MacLean Macdonald also deserves to be held in honorable remembrance.

Of the personality of the man there is scant record. His nephew (born 1844) describes him as a tall, spare man barely able to get about his room with the aid of a cane. In one of his note-books he has left a circumstantial account of the clothes he ordered in April, 1849, and again in September, 1856.

From these memoranda it would appear that he was scrupulously dressed on occasion.

The titles of the "McDonald Papers" and the dates upon which they were first publicly read are recorded on p. ix, of Part I. The nephew of their author has stated a reminiscence of unusual interest. As a boy he was taken with his uncle and the latter's attendant in the family carriage from Flushing across the ferry to New York City to the meetings of the New York Historical Society. It was a long journey in those days; then the papers were read and like many another auditor he fell asleep. He remembers his uncle huddled down in his seat listening intently. As the readings were finished the youthful interest was again stimulated by the ice-cream and cake and "repairing to the refectory" was an important and never-to-be-forgotten part of the occasion. And be it noted here that the practices of those early days are still observed at the meetings of the Society—as to the refreshments at any rate.

The "Papers," the note-books and the interviews of John Macdonald appear to have remained in possession of Geo. H. Moore<sup>1</sup> after the former's death in 1863. Various references indicate that Moore kept all of the Macdonald material with him as long as he lived. After his death copies of the "Interviews" that had been made by John English, a scrivener, came into the possession of Marcius D. Raymond of Tarrytown, N. Y. The "Papers" and note-books were retained by the daughters of Geo. H. Moore, Mrs. T. E. Vermilye and Mrs. Thos. E. V. Smith, and were finally deposited by them in the archives of the New York Historical Society on March 31, 1900. It is not known where the original manuscripts of the "Interviews" are now.

A careful search of the bibliography of Westchester County has disclosed comparatively few direct references to John

<sup>1</sup> Geo. H. Moore, LL.D., was born in 1823. In 1841 he became assistant librarian of the New York Historical Society and librarian in 1849. In 1872 he was elected superintendent and a trustee of the Lenox Library. He died May 5, 1892, leaving a large and valuable collection of historical materials. These were sold in two parts—Part I, on May 8 and 9, 1893, and Part II, on Feb. 5 and 6, 1894.

Macdonald and his labors. Such as were found are herein recorded.

In the account of "The Bench and Bar of Westchester County,"<sup>1</sup> Hon. Isaac N. Mills gives the following biography:

"John McDonald, a native of White Plains, practiced law from 1814 to 1826, with moderate success. He then moved to New York and became a Master in Chancery there. He spent the latter part of his life in gathering materials for a history of Westchester County. The result of his labors is a manuscript which is deposited in the Lenox Library, New York." It is now clear how the manuscript came to be in the Lenox Library at that time (1886).

In his article on White Plains,<sup>2</sup> Josiah S. Mitchell states:

"The first Orawaupum Hotel was built about 1844, near the New York and Harlem Railroad depot, and was kept by Mr. Isaac Smith. The name was suggested by the historian, John McDonald, it being the name of the principal Indian chief of whom the White Plains lands were purchased."

For many years the story of the "McDonald Papers" and their author has remained a mystery. This is well illustrated by the following<sup>3</sup>:

"John McDonald is said to have practiced law in Westchester County from 1814 until 1826. He was a native of White Plains and presumably was born there prior to 1788, when that town was part of the town of Rye. In 1826 he moved to New York City where he became a Master in Chancery. He spent the latter part of his life in gathering materials for a history of Westchester County. The result of his labors, according to Mr. Scharf, was a manuscript which was later deposited in the Lenox Library, but inquiry at the New York Public Library, which afterward acquired the Lenox Library, has disclosed no such manuscript there."

The following article is from Caleb Roscoe's "Westchester Herald," for October 7, 1856:

*Battle of White Plains.*—We learn with a high degree of pleasure, from an occasional correspondent, that an account

<sup>1</sup> Scharf, Vol. I, p. 542.

<sup>2</sup> Scharf, Vol. I, p. 740.

<sup>3</sup> "The Bar of Rye Township," by Arthur Russell Wilcox, 1918.

of the Battle of White Plains, prepared by John M. Macdonald, Esq., of this county, now residing at Flushing, (L. I.) will be read before the New York Historical Society, at their Hall in University Place, this evening (Oct. 7), commencing at 7 o'clock. We have some acquaintance with Mr. Macdonald as a literary gentleman, and know him to have been indefatigable in his effort to obtain and give the dignity of truth to the revolutionary events which took place in the county of Westchester; and we doubt not his essay will embody the most accurate account of that event offered the American public. We shall, if possible, attend and if it can be obtained, will publish the account at our earliest convenience.

The appended quotation is from "Souvenir of the Revolutionary Soldiers' Monument Dedication at Tarrytown, N. Y., Oct. 19, 1894" compiled by Marcius D. Raymond and published in 1894, pp. 7-8.

"The movement which culminated in the dedication of a monument at this place to the soldiers of the Revolution, had its inception in the desire to honor the memory of the sturdy patriots who by their courage and valor well sustained the cause of liberty and independence on these historic fields,—not only those who were buried in the old Dutch churchyard, but in a larger, broader sense to honor all those brave men who stood for the patriot cause on this, then Philipse Manor, which comprised the present townships of Greenburgh, Mount Pleasant, Ossining and the City of Yonkers, containing eighty square miles of territory, fronting over twenty miles on the Hudson and extending eastwardly to the Bronx. It was entitled one of the military districts of Westchester County, and in it a regiment of militia was organized, with headquarters in the vicinity of Tarrytown, which was then the place of greatest interest on the Manor, the old Dutch Church being here located, and consequently a large number of the soldiers of the Revolution here found their last resting place.

"Hence it was pre-eminently fitting that a mounment to their memory should be here erected. The appellation of 'Neutral Ground,' as commonly applied to all this region, is a strange misnomer, for from the beginning to the end of the

Revolution partisan warfare so waged here that it may well be said that every field was embattled, every rock a fortress, and every highway and by-way was a line of assault or retreat. Nowhere else was the country so devastated, nowhere greater suffering, severer trials, but to the everlasting praise of the patriots of this manor be it said, they 'yielded not;' their endurance was like the granite of these hills.

"An old redoubt thrown up during the Revolution, evidently to protect the legendary and historic bridge over the Pocantico, just on the verge which overlooks the old burying ground where so many of those heroes sleep, offered the ideal site for such a memorial.

"The circumstances were favorable. The men, the deeds, the spot, were all worthy of commemoration and the time had come. Only action was needed. Only the recalling of the history of those trying times, only the re-telling of the thrilling tales of those heroic days, only the reviewing of the memory of the men of the Revolution by the Sons of the Revolution, and it may also well be added, by the Daughters of the Revolution, and the flow of patriotic thought and feeling would soon crystallize in the enduring granite which should rise as a testimonial to those patriot heroes.

"That work was undertaken and carried forward with such a definite object in view, *the publication of the Revolutionary reminiscences having been commenced in the latter part of 1893, and so continued until the summer of 1894.* The results well justified expectation; public interest was created, and in June of the latter year a Monument Committee was organized. The work of obtaining subscriptions was then undertaken, to which the response was prompt and liberal beyond all expectations, warranting the making of a contract for the proposed monument, and showing that the spirit of patriotism was still alive in the hearts of the people. Only the occasion was needed to call it forth. The site had already been donated by the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery Association."

On this monument the name of John Odell, the Westchester Guide was inscribed among others. M. D. Raymond was editor and publisher of "The Tarrytown Argus." The "Inter-



views" of John M. Macdonald were freely published and used to arouse interest in this monument. When the "Interviews" came into Mr. Hufeland's possession the printer's marks and notations were still on many of them.

The erection of the Tarrytown monument was followed, in 1900, by the State of New York placing in the yard of the Yorktown Heights Church the memorial of classical design on which the name of Abraham Dyckman, among others, was chiselled. In 1926 the bronze memorial to Cornelius Oakley was dedicated by this Society.

As we turn to p. 96 of Part I of these papers the question there asked: "Where shall I find the monuments, &c., &c." can now be answered affirmatively; and the one who there asked the question was largely instrumental alike in preserving the stories and in establishing the memorials.

In the "Souvenir of the Tarrytown Monument," already referred to, Raymond has published a considerable number of the Macdonald reminiscences; but so far as research has revealed up to this time, the source from which they were obtained was not disclosed, either in the quotations in the "Tarrytown Argus" or in the "Souvenir."

Raymond also published in the "Souvenir" a number of reminiscences of Revolutionary events obtained from the Pension Papers of participants in this struggle. Historical accuracy and candor compel the admission that something more than the preservation of the records furnished the background for many of these stories. The germ of the United States pension system lay in the provision by Congress near the beginning of the Revolutionary War that officers who should continue in the service till the end of the war should receive half-pay during seven years thereafter. In 1785 Congress recommended to the States that they should make provision for invalid pensioners, and in 1808 the United States assumed the pension obligations of the States. These were only for persons disabled in the service.

In 1818 an act was passed granting pensions to all who had served nine months or more in the Revolutionary army, and were in indigent circumstances. More claimants applied than

could possibly have survived from Washington's army, and the amount required to be paid during the first year was eleven times what had been estimated, and in the second year seventeen times. Acts of 1836, 1848, and 1853 provided pensions for all widows of Revolutionary soldiers whenever married. A curious result was that in 1868, when all the Revolutionary pensioners were dead, there remained 888 widows of such soldiers; in 1893 thirteen remained.

The early records of the Westchester County Bar show that procuring pensions was an important part of the practice of many lawyers. To obtain a pension it was necessary to tell the story of the applicant's service. It is unlikely that any advocate would minimize the importance of the client's record. It is from this source that many of the stories have come and have also been preserved by this means.

Until the "Macdonald Interviews" are published, and it is to be hoped that this date will not be deferred longer than is necessary, it will be impossible to state authoritatively how much really new material he secured. It is safe to say, however, that for the first time an historically trained mind recorded the tales and by cross-examination undoubtedly amplified and developed many details.

The value of the "Interviews" in illuminating historical description is well shown by comparing the account of "Mosier's Fight" given by Judge Tompkins on pp. 61-62 and the description of the same affair prepared by Otto Hufeland, pp. 65-72. If as Emerson says there is no history, only biography, then the preservation of the reminiscences of the various participants in the Revolution is invaluable source material. It must be conceded that the Hufeland description of Mosier's defense is far superior to any other account of that event previously available, and the Macdonald "Interviews" are credited as the source of the enlightening information.

In making a critical study of the Macdonald materials it is difficult to understand why George H. Moore made no reference to the field work or "Interviews" in the resolutions spread upon the minutes of the New York Historical Society in 1863. Data in the Hufeland Westchesteriana show that in

1868 Robert Bolton was revising his History of the County of Westchester first published in 1848. Bolton made use of the testimony secured by Macdonald in numerous instances and in each case stated that the manuscripts were in possession of George H. Moore, Librarian of the New York Historical Society.

The explanation probably is that the manuscripts of the "Interviews" came into Moore's hands after Macdonald's death in 1863. Two wills were executed by John M. Macdonald. The first was in 1858 which bequeathed his effects to his brother Allan. After the latter's death in 1862, another will was executed in that year leaving the effects to the children of his brother James. It would appear, therefore, that sometime between 1863 and 1868 the manuscripts were entrusted to Moore, for if he had known them as he did the "Papers" he would have undoubtedly referred to them at length in the Resolutions spread upon the Minutes of the New York Historical Society.

The title given "The McDonald Papers" does not correspond in spelling with that used by the author. It should be noted that it was Nov. 10, 1927, before the story of Macdonald's life was accurately known outside of the immediate family. Such scholars as Robert Bolton, Josiah S. Mitchell, Rev. William J. Cumming, Isaac N. Mills, &c., all spelled the name "McDonald." For example in Bolton's "History of Westchester County," 1881, the following references occur, also spelled McDonald:

Vol. I. pp. 74, 167, 186, 194, 254, 273, 290, 358, 385.

Vol. II. pp. 84, 248, 249, 667, 669, 679, 686, 687.

When the interviews came to Mr. Hufeland the package was marked "McDonald Papers." The explanation probably is that his signature had not been seen by these writers in Westchester County and the facsimile reproduced in this volume is from the only one the editor has seen in carefully examining all of his records.

The name has been found spelled variously as follows: McDonald (most frequently), MacDonald, Macdonald, McDonnell, MacDonnell, McDonell, MacDonell, McDondeld and MacDoneld.

This variation in spelling and the difficulties it involves in research are referred to by J. P. MacLean, Ph.D., in "An Historical Account of the Settlements of Scotch Highlanders in America," Cleveland, 1900.

"The names of the people are interesting both as illustrating their origin, and as showing the extraordinary corruptions which some have undergone. As an illustration the proscribed Clan MacGregor may be cited . . . descendants of whom are still to be found under the names Grier, Greer, Gregor, etc., the Mac in general being dropped; MacKinnon becomes McKenna, McKean, McCannon; MacNish is McNeice, Menees, Munnis, Menies, etc."

The editor is aware that it would have been preferable to have placed this account of the author as a preface to Part I. In explanation it should be stated that my attention was first called to the Macdonald materials in 1922. Since that time the "Papers" have been carefully read several times and such data of their author as could be found has been compiled.

The "Interviews" were included in the Hufeland Westchesteriana in 1925 and are preserved there in splendid form. In scanning them my earlier impressions of the unusual merit of Macdonald's labors were confirmed and efforts to learn more about him continued down to the present time. These were not fully rewarded until quite recently with the information herein contained which is believed to be reliable.

When the testimony of the various persons interviewed is published, it will be possible to make an accurate analysis of all the Macdonald manuscripts. This sesquicentennial period is of sufficient importance, however, to publish such as are now available and leave until a later date the completion and fulfilment of the task. The sincerity of purpose, and loftiness of ideals of Macdonald encourage the hope that the balance of the manuscripts will be published at an early date.

Macdonald's illness and confinement consigned him to a sphere apart. He left no record of civic work; he was a student and worker in a limited field; but the spirituality of his writings will cause him to be remembered as long as the story of the Revolution is the background of the wonderful tales of

Cooper, and Irving, and a host of others, story-tellers, poets and historians, who have immortalized the territory now known as Bronx and Westchester Counties.

New Rochelle, N. Y.,  
November 25, 1927.

WILLIAM S. HADAWAY.

*Note:* In the records of his alma mater (Columbia 1810), Macdonald's name is written John McLain Macdonald. As the names of students are copied from Registrar's forms, this arrangement is presumably that preferred by the author himself.

It will be noted that "Mc" and "Mac" here occur in juxtaposition; also that "Lain" is written with a capital and "donald" without. This further illustrates the perplexing variations in spelling of names of Scottish derivation and the difficulties encountered in genealogical researches based on phonetic name similarities.

Under these circumstances it appears permissible to adopt the modern spelling of "MacLean" and "McDonald" as the equivalent of the forms accepted by family tradition and usage.

EDITOR.



## INDEX

- Allen, William, English philanthropist, on Tarleton, 48
- Althouse, Capt., capture of, at Croton, by inhabitants of the neighborhood, 62
- American army, lines of, in Westchester County, 1
- André, Major, the capture of, 60
- Archer's House, attack and capture of Delancey's force at, 8 ff.
- Armand, Col., French officer in American army, 15 ff.; services in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, 17-18; operations of his force in Westchester County, 19 ff.; capture of Maj. Bearmore and his force by, 21-3; in southern army, 25 ff.; at Yorktown, 27; his after career in France, 28 ff.; death of, 32; personality and character of, 33-5
- Barnes, Capt. Joshua, capture of, and his company by Americans, 62
- Bearmore, Major, in British service, 4, 19; capture of, by Col. Armand, 21-3
- Bedford, tavern of Benjamin Hays at, burnt by British, 43
- Benson, Egbert, member of committee of safety, 62
- Berthier (afterwards a marshal of France), one of French officers serving in Westchester County, 74, 75
- Biron, Duke de, 28
- Bolton, Robert, *History of Westchester County*, 73 n., 96
- Bradish, Luther, 81 n.
- British Army, lines of, in Westchester County, 2; scarcity of provisions of, in winter of 1780, and furnishing of supplies to by Westchester, Dutchess and Albany county farmers, 7
- Brundage Farm, Rye, location of Lieut. Mosier's stand against forty-five horsemen, 65
- Camden, battle of, 26
- Campbell, Archibald, refugee captain, killing of, 63
- Carpenter, Wright, capture of Delancey's horse by, 57-8
- Cathcart, Lord, 37
- Chafner, Maj., American officer concerned in La Rouërie's conspiracy in France, 30, 32
- Chateaubriand, visit of, to America, 35
- Choisy, Brig. Gen. de, surrender of Tarleton to, 48-9
- Clinton, Governor George, 64
- Clinton, Sir Henry, 36, 44, 45, 47, 67
- "Cold Winter" of the Revolution, 7
- Cornwallis, Lord, 17, 26
- Corsa, Andrew, last of the Westchester Guides, obituary of, 73-7; assists John M. Macdonald in his historical research, 88-9
- Corsa, Isaac, 25, 73
- Corsa, Stanley J., of Brooklyn, 73 n.
- Cowpens, defeat of Tarleton at, 48
- Crawford, Samuel, death of, 62-3
- Crompond, capture of American post at, 46
- Croton River, the, 1, 2
- Cushing, Capt., capture of Delancey's force at Archer's House by, 9 ff.
- De Kalb, Baron, 25
- Delancey, Col. James, 4; attempt to capture, at Archer's House in 1780, 8 ff.; accidental escape of, 12; takes command of Westchester refugees, 23; his final departure from Westchester, 50-2; capture of his horse, 57-8
- Delevan's Mills, capture of American post at, 46

- Delevan's Rangers, 63  
 Duer, Col. William, member of committee of safety, 62  
 Dumas, Count Mathieu, 74  
 Dyckman, Abraham, guide, 8, 10, 11, 12, 76, 94  
 Dyckman, Michael, guide, 8, 13  
 Emmerich, Lt.-Col. Andreas, Hanoverian in British service, 4, 19, 20  
 Ferris, Thomas, adventure of, at Throgs Neck, 58-9  
 Fisher, George J., M.D., biography of Dr. Alexander Macdonald by, 84-6  
 Floods, Capt. John, 55  
 French Revolution, 28 ff.  
 French's *History of Westchester County*, 73 n  
 Gates, Gen. Horatio, 25, 26  
 Gist, Col., in command of American outpost near Philipse Manor-house, 46  
 Green, Col., attack on and killing of, by Delancey's refugees, near Pinesbridge, 59  
 Greene, Gen. Nathanael, 17, 25, 27  
 Griffen, Capt. Jonathan, 53, 54  
 Guilford Court House, battle of, 47  
 Hadley's House, Col. Armand's successful attack on Hessians at, 19-20  
 Hamilton, Alexander, 27  
 Hays, Benjamin, his tavern at Bedford burnt by British, 43  
 Heath, Gen. William, 21, 22, 43  
 Hessians, 2, 18, 19-20  
 Holmes, Col. James, of refugee forces, 61, 69, 70  
 Honeywell, Capt., capture of, by British, 46  
 Howe, Gen. Robert, 21  
 Howe, Lord, headquarters of, during battle of White Plains, 63  
 Hufeland Westchesteriana, 73 n., 95, 97  
 Kilmaine, Lieut. (afterwards General), Irishman in French service in America, 74, 75  
 Kinnicutt, Luther, American spy, warns Americans of impending attack on Poundridge, 38; assists Ferris's escape at Throgs Neck, 58-9  
 Kipp, Capt. Samuel, of refugee forces, 61, 69, 70  
 Knyphausen, Lt.-Gen., 7  
 La Fayette, Marquis de, 15, 17, 27  
 Lauzun, Gen., in French service in America, 74, 75  
 Leavenworth, Maj., with American forces at Poundridge, 36; pursuit of Tarleton's retreat from, 42-31  
 Lee, Gen. Charles, capture of, by British, 45  
 Lee, Henry, account of surrender of Tarleton at Gloucester, Va., in his memoirs, 48-9  
 Leggett house, capture of Maj. Bearmore and his force at, 21-3  
 Levensworth, Capt., of American army, capture of enemy force of Capt. Barnes by, 62  
 Lockwood, Maj., in command of American infantry during capture of Poundridge by Tarleton in 1779, 36 ff.  
 Lounsberry, William, first person killed in the Revolution in Westchester County, 54-5  
 Loyalists seek new homes in Nova Scotia at close of Revolution, 50  
 Macdonald, Dr. Alexander, father of John M. Macdonald, 78, 79, 84-6  
 Macdonald, Allan, 87, 88  
 Macdonald, Flora, mother of John M. Macdonald, 78, 86  
 Macdonald, Dr. James, 87-8  
 Macdonald, John M., remarks on his ancestry and historical services before New York Historical Society, 78 ff.; resolution of the Society on his death, 82-3; sketch of his life and work, 84 ff.; the "McDonald Interviews, 88-9, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97; spelling of his name, 96-7, 98  
 Mamaroneck, first bloodshed of Revolution in Westchester County in, 54-5  
 Marcy, William Larned, Governor, 87  
 Merritts Corners, American outpost at, 67  
 Milesquare, British advance guard at, 37

- Millen, Col., in command of American outposts, 8, 9
- Mills, Hon. Isaac N., 91, 96
- Mitchell, Josiah S., History of White Plains, 86, 91, 96
- Moore, George H., remarks on John M. Macdonald before the New York Historical Society, 78 ff.; Macdonald's and other historical material in collection of, 90 and *n.*, 96
- Morris, Maj.-Gen. Lewis, 54
- Morris, Louis, 8
- Mosier, Lt. William, his gallant stand against forty-five horsemen, 61-2, 65 ff.
- Moylan's regiment of dragoons, 37, 46
- Munro, Peter J., 79
- Neutral Ground, the, country comprised by, 2; conditions of the inhabitants of, 3; raided by forces on both American and British sides, 4-5
- New York Historical Society, resolutions of, concerning John M. Macdonald, 82-3
- Nimham, Stockbridge Indian chief, 45, 46
- Nova Scotia, loyalists seek new homes in, at close of Revolution, 50
- Oakley, Cornelius, guide, 8, 10, 11, 74, 94
- Oakley, James, guide, 8, 10, 74
- Odell, John (Col.), guide, 8, 13, 60, 93; combat of, on the ice at Sing Sing, 55-7
- Paddock, Lieut., of Delevan's Rangers, killing of, 63
- Patterson, John (colored), of Mosier's force at Brundage Farm skirmish, 67-8 *n.*, 70
- Pensioners, Revolutionary, 94-5
- Philipse Manor-house, 46
- Poundridge, capture of, by Tarleton in 1779, 36 ff.; destruction of property at by British, 41-2
- Queen's Rangers, 19, 20
- Raymond, Marcius D., 90, 92, 93, 94
- Refugees, troops organized from, on both American and British sides, 4-6
- Rochambeau, Count, 27, 28, 74, 75
- Rouërie, Marquis de la, *see* Armand, Col.
- Sackett, Capt. Richard, captured by refugees, 61, 67-8
- Scharf's *History of Westchester County*, 86 *n.*, 91 *n.*
- Sheldon, Col., in command of American troops at Poundridge at time of its capture by Tarleton in 1779, 36 ff.
- Simcoe, Lt. Col., in British service, 19, 20, 45, 46
- Smith, Mrs. Thomas E. V., 90
- "Souvenir of the Revolutionary Soldiers' Monument Dedication at Tarrytown," quoted, 92-3
- Stockbridge Indians, ambuscaded and cut to pieces by British under Simcoe, 45-6
- Sugar-House, used by British as prison, 44
- Tallmadge, Maj. (later General), at Poundridge, 39, 42
- Tarleton, Lt.-Col. Banastre, British partisan leader, 19; capture of Poundridge by, 36 ff.; sketch of his life, 44 ff.; death of, 48; his person and military character, 49
- Tarrytown, Revolutionary Soldiers' Monument at, 92
- Thompson, Col., stops for a time the furnishing of supplies by farmers to the British in winter of 1780, 7; attack on and capture of, by British at Young's house, 8, 60
- Tompkins, Judge Caleb, recollections of the Revolution by, 53 ff.; his service in the Revolution, 64
- Tompkins, Daniel D., 54
- Tompkins, Jonathan G., 53-4; member of committee of safety, 62; public offices held by, 64
- Tories, in British service, 2, 3-4
- Tryon, royal governor, 7
- Van Tassel Papers, the, 73 *n.*
- Varian, James, 53
- Vermilye, Mrs. T. E., 90
- Vienne, Monsieur de, 18
- Washington, Gen. George, 16, 27, 28, 35, 67, 72, 74, 75

- Washington, Lt.-Col. William, reputed single combat with Tarleton, 47
- Washington, Fort, capture of, 63
- West Farms, final departure of Col. James Delancey from, 51
- Westchester County Medical Society, 84, 85
- Westchester Herald*, 68 n., 73 n., 91
- Westchester Spy, The*, first newspaper in White Plains, 87
- Westchesteriana, the Hufeland, 73 n., 95, 97
- White, Lt. Col. Anthony Walton, in command of Moylan's regiment of dragoons, 46, 47
- Wilcox, Arthur Russell, quoted on John M. Macdonald, 91
- Williams, Capt. Daniel, 45; escape from British on the ice at Sing Sing, 56
- Wurmb, Hessian Colonel, 19, 23
- Yorktown, Va., 27, 47, 48, 67
- Yorktown Heights Church, memorial at, 94
- Youngs, Samuel, guide, 8
- Young's house, Col. Thompson's American force overpowered at, 8, 60













3 6655 00105897 2

OCT 25 1977

F  
127  
.W5  
H3  
vol.2

Hadaway, Wm. S.

The McDonald papers

7803

DATE	ISSUED TO
OCT 25 1977	<i>Chris Gjervik</i> 572

F  
127  
.W5  
H3  
vol.2

7803

Walter A. Maier Library  
Concordia Collegiate Institute  
Bronxville 8, New York





